EON

THE OFFICIAL EVE-ONLINE MAGAZINE ISSUE #002 US$14.95

WHO WILL YOU FIGHT FOR?

EMPIRES STRIKE BACK

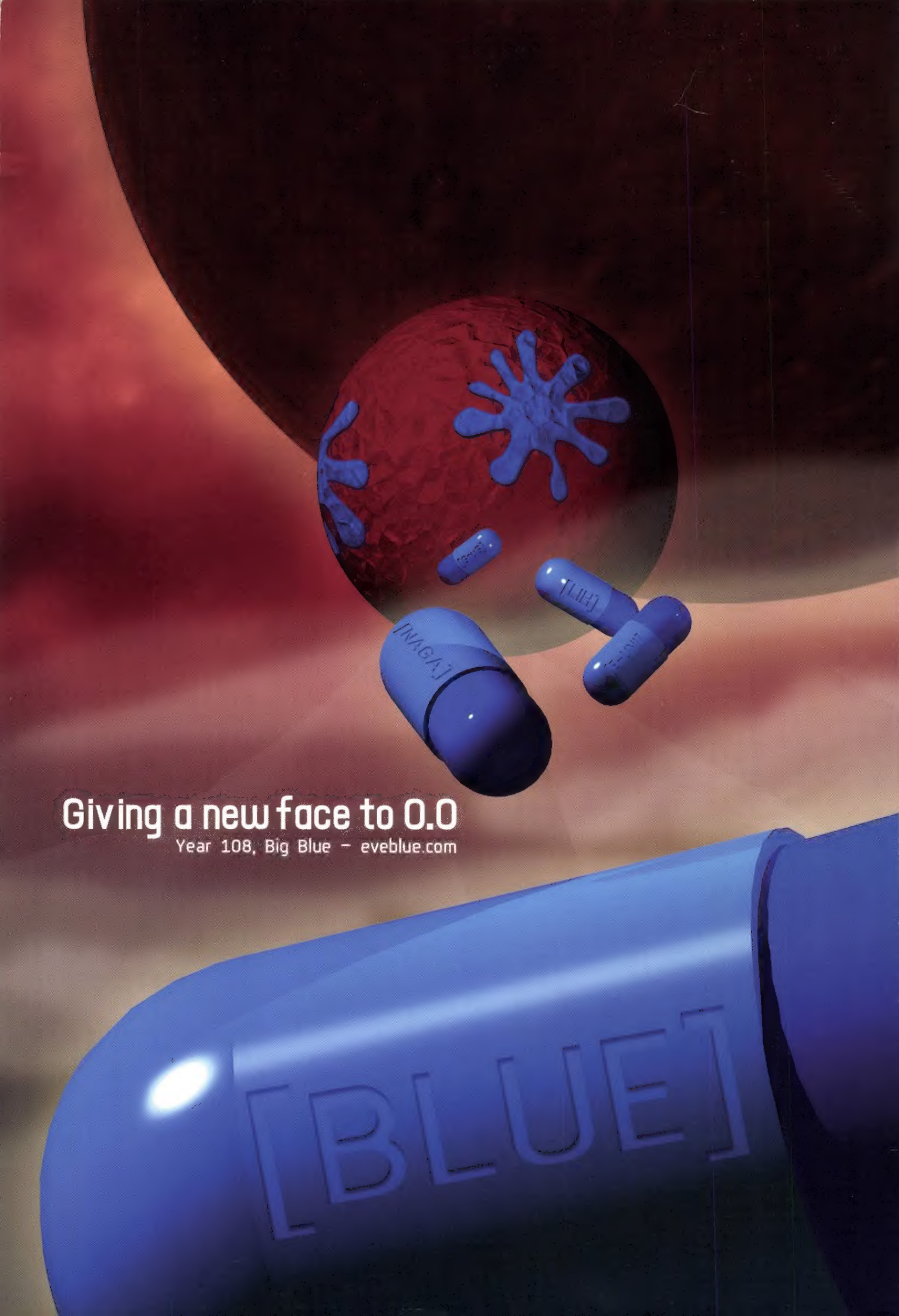
WAR IS COMING AND EVERYONE'S INVITED

FANFEST 2005
FULL REPORT ON THE SECOND ANNUAL PLAYER GATHERING

PAPER PLAY
CCP'S NEW CARD GAME COMES UP TRUMPS

EVE ONLINE

PLUS: NEW CHRONICLES BY HERKO KERGHANS, WINTERBLINK AND ISTVAAN SHOGAATSU • GUIDES TO TRADING, RECRUITMENT AND TANKING



Giving a new face to 0.0

Year 108, Big Blue – eveblue.com

EON

Issue #002 • Winter 2005/06

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If you have any questions, suggestions or comments relating to *E-ON* magazine, or would like to nominate a player for a future *In Character* article, please email eon@mmmpublishing.com. For advertising, please email ads@mmmpublishing.com for current rates. Queries related directly with EVE-Online should be directed to CCP Games; www.ccpgames.com.

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YOU WILL BE READING...

BODA KHAN

Ms. Khan has a great deal of experience with... well, pretty much any game you'd care to mention. Her offline alter-ego has been deeply involved in beta testing CCP's CCG EVE: TSG. TLAs 4TW!

DIGITALCOMMUNIST

Recently it all became too much for DC. Tired of merciless killing, he disappeared and was found by chance lurking in an asteroid belt, sucking up scordite in his Ibis. We swiftly podded him and he's back to his nefarious ways.

ISTVAAN SHOGAATSU

The Godfather of New Eden brings you a tale of technological terror sure to leave you scratching at your skin!

HERKO KERGHANS

A prolific writer of EVE fiction, Herko is a true community writer. When he isn't writing his own material, he's usually helping with someone else's.

LAIRD

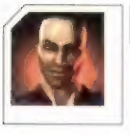
Laird likes nothing better than to lean back in his command chair and have his old employees fan him with balma leaves.

NYPHUR

When Nyphur first proposed we publish his exhaustive guide to tanking we had to turn him down. But then we realised his heavy Gallente accent meant he had problems pronouncing his 't's.

WINTERBLINK

With a Word/Photoshop macro automatically creating his WDAs, Blinky has turned to writing. Once he figures out a macro for that, he'll begin work mapping out the EVE universe using pasta shapes.



ZAPATERO

Various Tech II vessels were found littering SiSi recently and the trail led back to our esteemed editor, who had carelessly left the cargo bay doors open on his Mega Cargo Ship. As punishment his blue-text powers were temporarily downgraded to taupe.

THE DIFFICULT SECOND ISSUE

It's been quite a tough issue this time around for all concerned. Musicians approach their 'difficult second album' with some degree of trepidation, and so was the case with E-ON. However, it wasn't that the original cover feature had to be dropped – that happened quite early on. Nor was it particularly harrowing that other features had to be delayed for reasons of bad timing or prior commitments on the part of their respective writers, simply that we had to aim that much higher and reach our goals in half the time we had available to create issue #001. Schedules haven't helped. Christmas is never an easy deadline to have to work towards, but when you're trying to get secret info and exclusive art out of CCP, who in turn has been tirelessly working towards furthering its own product under the guise of Red Moon Rising, then that will cause a fair degree of worry. In the middle of all this was the Fanfest – another timesink. Yeah, it's been hard work. Fun, but hard.

Compared to the efforts of others, E-ON's appear insignificant: Börkur, CCP's artist in charge of illustrating fiction (E-ON #001, p56) recently became a father but volunteered to create the illustrations for two of our Chronicles whilst on paternity leave. His commitment was equalled by many others, one of whom, John Augar, started recreating the 3D models for this issue's *Testflight* (p44) quite some time ago, and the process of remodelling, retexturing and rendering has taken months of his free time to complete. In fact, were it not for the tireless efforts of another talented 3D modelling artist, Willem van Biljon, they might never have been completed on time. The commitment shown by CCP and the wider community to further EVE is a source of constant amazement to me. That thousands of hours are spent each month creating websites, writing stories and making movies for little reward other than for the appreciation of others makes my own humble contribution seem pitiful. Which is why we're planning to pay homage to EVE's amazing commonwealth of players more and more. Much material for issue #003 is already in production, content that will show just how much effort goes in to expanding the wider world of EVE.

ZAPATERO

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT YEAR!

Friðrik Keli María
Nathan Magnús Dan
Kristján Vincent Hólmfríður
Hansi MIKE Kristín
Anna Katrín Siggi G Charles
Hilmar Ísak Rúnar Þór Eysteinn
Gauti Finnur K
Richard Elisabet Jörundur
Rósey Horace Sig. Ólafsson

CCP

E-ON

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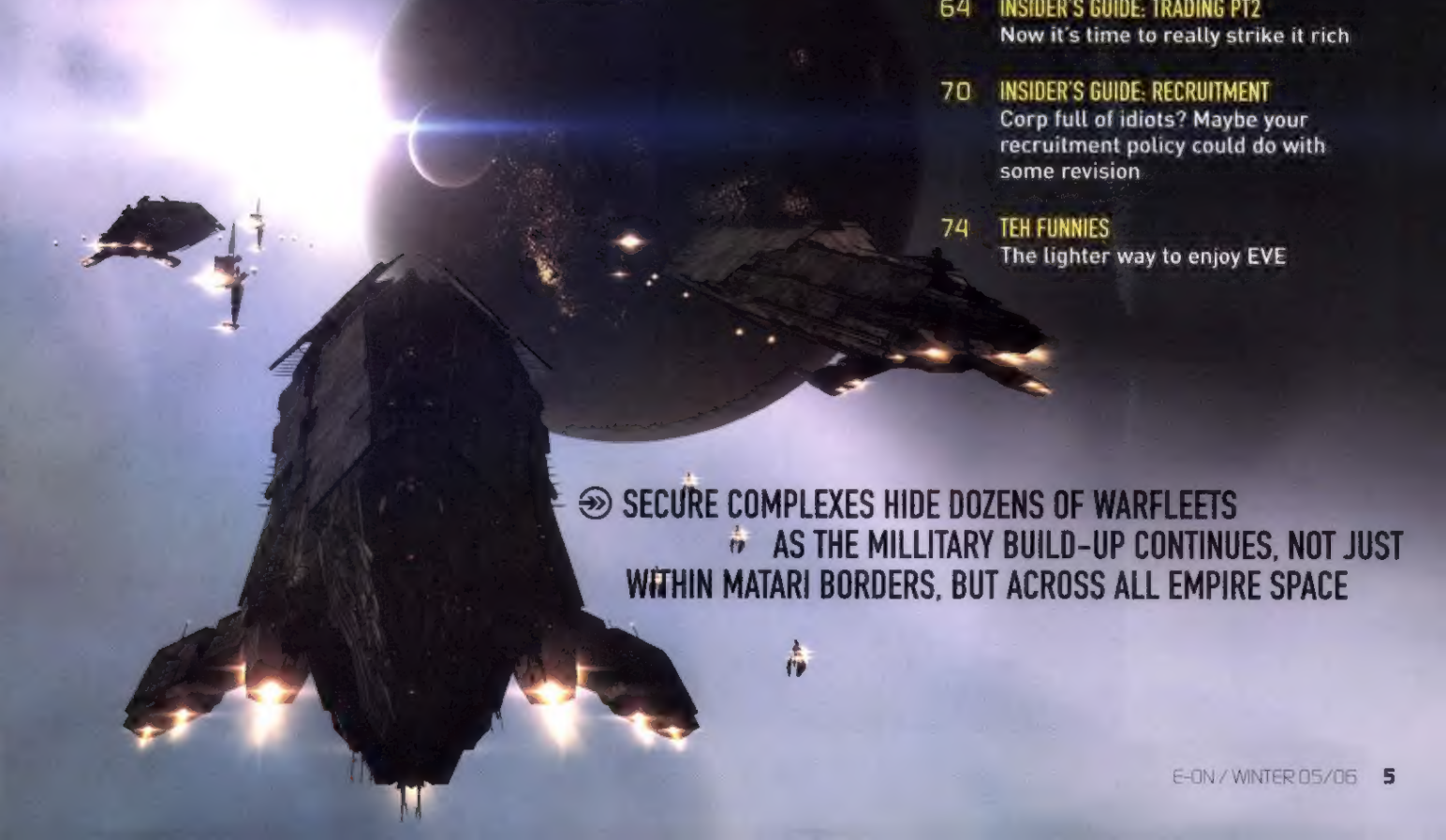


SECURE COMPLEXES HIDE DOZENS OF WARFLEETS AS THE MILLITARY BUILD-UP CONTINUES, NOT JUST WITHIN MATARI BORDERS, BUT ACROSS ALL EMPIRE SPACE

RED MOON RISES

...THE ROAD TO KALI OPENS

After some last minute jitters, punctuated by server crashes and some nervous hotfixing, the long-awaited content patch, Red Moon Rising, was successfully deployed on 15th December. With it came new ships, server and client optimizations and increased functionality for individuals, corporations and alliances to further their iron grip on frontier systems.

Twenty four hours of nervous downtime were endured by player and dev alike, followed by three days of frustration and furious fixing, but it was a close-run thing that RMR was integrated into EVE when it was. Just 48 hours before deployment, Nathan Richardsson, EVE's Senior Producer, considered delaying the much-anticipated release until January.

"It's always dangerous to release updates for EVE," he laughs. "Not releasing updates is also dangerous; we're constantly improving and optimizing, so it's a double-edged sword. In the end it's about sacrificing short-term tranquility for future benefits.

"Releasing any closer to Christmas would've risked ruining the holidays for players, so we thought about moving the launch 'till the second or third week of January," continues Nathan. "But the period around Christmas has traditionally had limited testing efforts, so we wouldn't have gained anything worthwile in additional testing."

Red Moon Rising deployment was not without its problems, but within a matter of days EVE hit a new record for concurrent users, with nearly 21,000 online together

As The Cold War Edition went offline for the final time, the work began on updating the database, an extensive 10-hour operation, followed by the integration of the new code into Tranquility. Volunteers and developers then dry-ran the updated code and database and it was then that problems were detected.

"We found a number of serious issues, such as an error which caused a lot of blueprints to be scattered all over the universe – a script we had triple-tested in-house. After addressing that and a number of other bugs which arose by simply deploying the code base on such a large cluster, we eventually opened for customers."

There is always a rush for players to try out new updates, and RMR was no different. Systems were already in place to deal with log-in load,

DESTINATION VEGAS

BRIGHT LIGHT CITY TO SET EVE'S SOUL ON FIRE

There have been unofficial player gatherings before, but not on the scale of 'The Gathering', an event due to take place in March that aims to give North American EVE players the chance to meet up without the financial and physical hardship of travelling to Iceland.

Taking place on March 15th and 16th, the event is being organised by Gerald Buyea (aka *Blackhole Bob*), who, like many EVE fans who use their real-life skills to further the reach of the EVE community, is a bit of a veteran party organiser.

"I've been in the production business for more than 20 years, and our staff carry many more years of experience," he says. "Recently we were involved with the band KorN during its CD release party. Although this will be our first venture into gaming, we don't see it as being any different to organizing a corporate party or large concert. It's just a new environment with new challenges."

The Gathering is being hosted in the self-styled entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas, retirement home to the stars and synonymous with all that is sick and wrong with our modern consumerist society. One might say it was the perfect venue.

"Vegas is one of the cheapest cities in the world to travel to and stay in," proclaims Gerald. "The city is also, shall we say, scalable. Whether we manage to gather a 100 or 1000 pilots, we'll need facilities. Vegas has

but performance problems were eating up the CPU, and database issues necessitated a number of unscheduled periods of downtime. Despite this, CCP smashed its concurrent user record with close to 21,000 people simultaneously logged into EVE three days after release, many of which were actually having fun.

"Murphy's Law is constantly hitting us in the head and we can't seem to shake that one off," says Nathan, "so in future we're going to increase the number and frequency of optimizations separate from major releases. We've been doing so with server hotfixes, but we want to put more effort into that so that we can focus our efforts on increasing performance separately from fixing bugs associated with new features. However, the biggest lesson must be that we need to estimate more headroom on our cluster for performance bugs in releases. The 25 per cent CPU room at peak times is not sufficient – the main cause for bad performance in highly loaded systems. The lag got severe and in some cases resulted in whole systems getting stuck."

Right now, Nathan assures us, Tranquility is running well. Optimizations have increased general performance, despite some bugs left nibbling away at the performance increases that have resulted from RMR's deployment. Now it's time for CCP to turn its attentions to the next major release.

"Kali, as a result of us getting these RMR high-end goals out of the way, will focus more on deepening gameplay for all players, adding rewarding exploration, next-gen research, Factional Warfare and new Tech I ships such as Tier-2 Battlecruisers and Tier-3 Battleships. We started on this last year and design started in 2004. We've already travelled quite a way down the road to Kali, but there's still a long way to go."

HARDWARE INCOMING

New server hardware has been ordered and could be in place by the end of March. "The new server cluster will very likely come in batches since it's a large amount of hardware and we have other infrastructure changes coming at the same time, such as more multi-homing network backbones," says Nathan Richardsson.
The new hardware is all 64-bit which, together with simultaneous software server infrastructure upgrades, means performance increases are assured.

"We might actually utilize some of the old hardware in addition to the new cluster, for services which are far less CPU- and memory-dependant, such as corporation services, evemail and the market. In short, we're going to get more hardware, more optimizations and more rapid deployment of them, and, of course, fix the bugs. All in all a good plan for the near future."

IN BRIEF

After years of loyal service, the punch cards, vacuum tubes and hamster wheels are soon to be replaced

them like no other city. This seriously makes it viable for fans to gather at the lowest cost. Besides, doesn't everyone want to come to Sin City?"

Aside from the obvious local attractions, Gerald hopes to lure players with a schedule of events that will take in discussions, meet-and-greets with CCP attendees (who will hopefully be attending in lieu of the Game Developers' Conference in San Jose) and plenty of raucous fun. Mostly it's about the fun.

As well as prizes, a full day of conferences, The Gathering will feature a gaggle of EVE beauties dressed up to look like in-game ladies (most of which are hairy-arsed men, of course... in-game, that is).

"They'll be a big hit, I'm sure," laughs Gerald. "And somewhere in all this we'll fit in a day's worth of conference. Then there is the awesome After Hours Party at the world famous Rainbow Bar & Grill, one of the top five nightclubs in Vegas, where there'll be dinner for everyone and rock and roll music videos all night long. Things will for sure get a little crazy with good fun, food, music and drink. You never know which famous rock star might just turn up. Being here with fans and developers will be a blast."

Given the location, the price ($129.95 per ticket) and the abundance of cheap accommodation, Gerald is confident players will come in their hundreds. Facilities have been arranged for 500, roughly the same size as the official Fanfest. Gerald hopes The Gathering will grow to be a massive annual event, but he's not aiming to overshadow CCP's official festivities.

"The Fanfest is one of a kind," he admits. "The Gathering will be more of an extension, for pilots to celebrate the game more than look behind the scenes. This will be more of a party and most likely be a little more crazy – Las Vegas does that to people."

We're sold. Hopefully E-ON will be there, if not in body, then in spirits. Spirits in body, hopefully.

For more information visit www.evegathering.com. If you wish to check out events more local to you, there is the 'Player Gathering and Events' messageboard on the Official EVE forums.

SITES FOR SORE Is

TWO EVE-Is ARE BETTER THAN NONE

Most of you will already have noticed not one, but two, new EVE fansites on the Internet, both of which are aiming to partially fill the void left by the sudden disappearance of EVE-I when it drifted too close to a black hole back in September last year.

First off the launchpad last November was EVE-Offline (www.eve-offline.com), the latest of many EVE-related projects created and maintained by Chris Green (aka *Chribba*, creator of www.eve-files.com and www.eve-search.com). Then a few days later came the trumpeted arrival of EVEnews (www.evenews.com), managed by EVE-I's legendary content guru *Latta*.

"When I started playing EVE, EVE-I was a bit on the stagnant side," says Martin Ellis, the webmaster for EVEnews. "However, at the time it was seen as the premier EVE fan site and any attempt to try and knock it from its perch was going to fail. When it went down, I realised it was then the ideal time to introduce what I felt would be a true EVE fansite."

As they tend to, great minds thought alike; Chris started work on his site soon after the demise of EVE-I and had similar ambitions to replace it with something that would, in time, surpass it. "At the time I was planning EVE-Offline I was not aware of any other projects," he admits. "Now that EVEnews is up, I'm thinking I should redo EVE-Offline into something that focuses on the strengths of its current features rather than as a direct replacement for EVE-I."

Martin admits his own long-term plans for EVEnews are 'hazy'. However, in-game browser compatibility is a priority, as well as a dynamic sovereignty map, player blogging, a marketplace, agent database and customisable skins. The most promising feature however is the corp and alliance hosting: "I want to allow for home pages that can be customised by a corporation and/or alliance, available only to that organisation along with an incredibly powerful killboard system using an ELO-style ranking method."

Though similar in many respects, EVEnews and EVE-Offline are markedly different. EVEnews offers more original content, whereas Offline features direct links to the latest alliance map and diplomacy table and includes a character creation tool. Both are certainly worthwhile and are sure to develop into sites worthy of following in EVE-I's footsteps. The question remains as to whether EVE-I itself will reappear at some stage. We get the feeling that EVE-I isn't quite as dead as people think.

OFFICIAL EVE ONLINE CHARTS

TOP 10 MOST DANGEROUS SYSTEMS

(by total registered ship kills over last three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
Jita	The Forge
Kisogo	The Forge
EC-P8R	Pure Blind
Rens	Heimatar
Oursulaert	Essence
Sobaseki	Lonetrek
PF-346	Syndicate
HED-GP	Catch
Renyn	Essence
Dunpant	Essence

TOP 10 BUSIEST SYSTEMS

(By number of warpgate activations over past three months)

SYSTEM	REGION
Renyn	Essence
Jita	The Forge
Sobaseki	Lonetrek
Rens	Heimatar
Algogille	Essence
Oursulaert	Essence
Ashab	Domain
Urlen	The Forge
Alentene	Verge Vendor
Perimeter	The Forge
Onga	Heimatar

TOP 10 PRODUCTION CORPORATIONS

(Corp 'production' skillpoint total / No. of members. Corp size >= 25)

Frontier Technologies [FTEK]
N.A.G.A Corporation [NAGA]
Serenity Inc [SERCO]
The Fated [FATED]
Omega Enterprises [OE]
Resonant Dynamics [RESDY]
Mare Stellaris [MARES]
Phoenix Propulsion Labs [P.P.L]
AVE EVE [AXA]
The Knights Templar [T-K-T]

TOP 10 MOST POPULAR CRUISERS

#1 Thorax

#2 Osprey

#3 Caracal

#4 Blackbird

#5 Moa

#6 Rupture

WARP DRIVE ACTIVE

E-ON EDITION [C] M.LASTUCKA

WIRELESS EVE

CALLING PLAYERS ON THE MOVE

Announced at the Fanfest back in October was CCP's intention to release a mobile edition of EVE. Currently the product of a joint research project between CCP and Reykjavik University, a limited prototype client is already running on GSM phones, which allows users to log into the game, access characters, set skill training and manage items.

"EVE is a game where you can do a lot of things without having full 3D," says Hilmar Petursson, CCP's CEO. "We are focusing on everything that can be done in-station and hopefully players will also be able to chat and monitor chat channels, although this is one of the more difficult parts to implement.

"It's coming along," he adds, "but there are a lot of commercial and security issues to work out."

#7 Maller

#8 Vexor

#9 Exequror

#10 Omen

EVE PLAYER AWARDS 2006

VOTE TO WIN THE CHANCE TO PLAY EVE FREE FOR FIVE YEARS!

It will soon be time to cast your vote in the first annual player awards, as we seek to find out who you think are the most important ambassadors to the EVE universe. A panel of carefully-selected judges are currently engaged in heated debate over who'll be short listed in what are sure to be regarded as the most important awards in the entire universe. The EVE Player Awards will crown the true champions of EVE and bestow upon them untold riches and renown the like of which no space pilot will have experienced since John Travolta and friends won seven Golden Raspberries back in 2000 for *Battlefield Earth*. Twelve main award categories are planned, ranging from the event of the year, to the best fansites and the most cherished corporations and alliances, culminating in the award for the EVE Player's Personality of 2006.

Voting will commence online via the official website (www.eve-online.com/awards) during January and will end in early March; all paying EVE subscribers will be eligible to vote on a per-account basis. Accounts must have been created before 1st Jan 2006 to be eligible. All those who vote will be entered into a draw to win T-shirts and signed posters, and for one lucky E-ON reader, there is the chance to win a five-year free subscription to EVE Online – just remember to enter your order number from the email you received when you took out your E-ON subscription. Final nominations for each award category will be posted online soon and the full results of the vote will be exclusively revealed in the next issue of E-ON in April.

COMPETITION

DESIGN A MODULE AND SEE IT IN-GAME

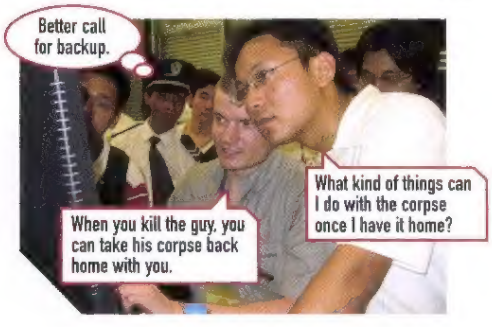
A slightly different competition for you this issue – one that requires you to engage in some serious study for no gain at all. That's right, no T-shirts, no faction Battleships, not even a pair of EVE socks will be given to the winner. The only satisfaction to be had from entering the compo is the warm glow of fulfilment that comes from seeing others take pleasure in what you have created. If that appeals, read on.

What we'd like you to do is design a new module. It can be for any slot, any size ship, as bizarre, as outlandish, pointless or as sensible as you see fit. Perhaps some new weapon guidance system, or a fireworks launcher, or even a biomass conversion device that converts frozen corpses into small trophies? The possibilities are almost endless.

What we are looking for is a short description of the module (no more than 200 words), what it does, how it might be used, what skills might be required and the benefits and costs associated with equipping it. You're welcome to go into what the building requirements might be, grid/CPU usage and all the other stats, but that's not essential.

We'll be going through the most interesting inventions next issue, but if ultimately you would like to see your module in-game, you will need to think carefully about how the mod might change gameplay, whether it deepens the EVE experience or completely screws things up. See, it's not as easy as it seems...

The rules: the competition is open to everyone and there are no limits on how many times you can enter. Please email your entries to win@mmmpublishing.com, and remember to keep your entry text below 200 words. Entries must reach us before 17th March 2006. All entries will be judged by CCP. There is no guarantee that any entries will be incorporated into EVE Online. First, heat the oven to 180 degress. Mix the sugar and butter together, sift in the flour, then using a metal knife fold in the beaten egg...



#001 CAPTION COMPO WINNER

Daniel Fadil (aka *Hired Goon*), who also featured in last issue's Cloned At Birth competition, has won a giant box filled with loot. Please don't win any more Daniel, people might get suspicious.

PRIVATE CHAT...

EVE's laureate author, Tony Gonzales, climbs out of his prototype Raven for a quick word...

How was Fanfest for you?
For the most part, I don't remember much about the entire experience at all. But I'm told that I had a great time, which I'm glad to hear.

What lead you to the world of EVE?
A friend and I were wondering why a game like this didn't already exist, and actually started brainstorming a crazy plan to create one. During the research, we found EVE Online when it was in beta. That put the kibosh on our lofty ambitions.

What was it about EVE that inspired you to write fiction based upon the game?
For me, EVE is a vision of where we, as a civilization, could go someday. Whenever I look up at the night sky, I wonder what it would be like to travel to those stars. EVE takes me there. That's my inspiration.

How important is background fiction to EVE – both the game and the universe?
Absolutely crucial. It puts the game experience into a 'real' context in which your imagination can immerse itself.

What had you written prior to *Ruthless*?
The Science of Never Again chronicle and the *Forsaken Ruins* short story. Plus several news articles when I was an ISD news correspondent.

We have a short story coming soon to the website... What stage is it at, what's it called, what's it about?
The final draft is complete, and Börkur is working his surreal magic with the illustrations. The story is called *Theodicy*, and it is about... (*I tried, really I did, but... *sigh* – Ed*)

Rumours suggest you've been asked to write an EVE novel with a view to seeing it published? How do you feel about that?
Humbled. Honoured. Stunned.

Do you already have ideas for the novel? Could you see a series developing from it?
Yes. And most certainly yes.

Fanfiction is looked down upon from a great height by science-fiction writers.... Why do you think this is? Would you class your writing as 'fanfiction'? Do you think this genre has a place in the canon of classic sci-fi writing?
I wasn't aware that science fiction authors had that view of fanfiction, but if I had to guess why, it's probably because all the good ones are already dead. As far as 'classifying' my writing, I'll say this: when you remove the names and classifications from the equation, all that remains is the story itself, and it either connects with the reader or it doesn't. Everything else, including the genre, is unimportant. Ultimately it's the readers that decide what literature – fanfiction, science fiction, or otherwise – gets labelled as 'classic'.

You have a great idea for a story at the same time as a corp mate insists you log in to save the corporation from annihilation – what do you do?
Write the idea down, then tell the corp mate to press the 'win' button on the corp Titan.

We are not a mining Corp.
We are not a PVP Corp.
We are a 0.0 Corp.

And This Is Our Home.

CONFEDERATION OF THE RED MOON

EVE FANFEST

THE SYSTEM: REYKJAVIK. REGION: NORTHERN EUROPE. FIVE HUNDRED POD-PILOTS FLOCK TO A SMALL CCP OUTPOST TO PLUG THE ULTIMATE ISK SINK. TRADE IS BRISK, LAG MINIMAL, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CORDIAL AND NOT A SINGLE SHOT IS FIRED IN ANGER. E-ON'S EDITOR LOOKS BACK ON TWO FREEZING OCTOBER DAYS WHEN EVE WAS AT PEACE

Iceland is hardly what you'd call a bargain holiday destination. The name alone is enough to turn people away (as was apparently intended when the country was named back in the ninth century), but even when you realise this surprisingly clement arctic state isn't quite as inhospitable as its name suggests, the dent on the wallet can be more than a little intimidating, especially if you choose to subsist on a diet of little more than beer and pizza.

Prejudices aside, and despite minor issues of temporary overcrowding thanks to the concurrent Iceland Airwaves music festival, close to 500 EVE fans descended on Reykjavik, most from the UK and North America, a few from Australia and beyond, to meet friends, enemies, volunteers and developers to celebrate all that is EVE as it nears it's third birthday. With rising numbers of paying subscribers, plans to release the game in China, the subsequent release of Titans and other vessels, not to mention the technical challenges that come with sustained growth, it was going to be an interesting couple of days for all concerned.

Apart from the running time – two full days – the most noticeable change from last year's EVE love-in was having all the official festivities hosted in the same location, Loftkastalinn (host of last year's more linear one-day epic). Last year there were four separate venues scattered around town (scattered is perhaps the wrong word to use given the relative size of Reykjavik compared to other European capitals); this year, unless you wanted to eat or sleep, there was little need to leave the outwardly soviet-styled conference centre.

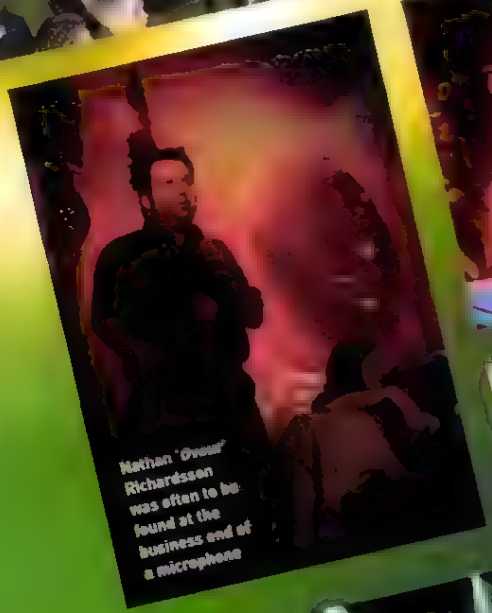
LEARNING CURVE

Whilst the venue was open on the Thursday evening for registration, EVE-related product acquisition and the annual *kieron*-shearing spectacle, Fanfest 2005 properly commenced on Friday 21st October with the EVE Championship kicking off in the 'Complex' and an impressive run of Tech Lectures taking place in the rather [illegible] hangover-friendly surroundings of the adjacent [illegible]. Given the fragility [illegible] own constitution (thanks [illegible] lag even [illegible] enlightening, be[illegible] filled conversation [illegible] EVE's [illegible] designer [illegible] before), I [illegible] spend most of th[illegible] ing to [illegible] the [illegible]nical details [illegible]ory [illegible] ongoing developm[illegible] Ichi[illegible] largest [illegible] universe. Needless to say, m[illegible] it w[illegible] ver[illegible]d, and the rest seemed to go in one ear and [illegible] papa smurf's detailed presentation on the network clust[illegible] by far the most punishing hour of academic torture I've ever endured, so much so that I was disappointed not to receive some sort of certificate upon leaving my seat. Nevertheless, I think I speak for all when I say that EVE's one-world architecture is far more complex than at first we thought, and whilst CCP seems to be doing a great deal to fix all the issues (as the subsequent lecture taught us), its efforts must be carefully considered and be as proactive as they are reactive.

Mulling over the technicalities of load-balancing and proxy-prefixed mumbo jumbo, I decided to take advantage of a welcome break in proceedings to check out what was going down in the Complex. Evidently a fair bit, as it turned out, with pilots falling like flies in the first

Left: John Hallur (aka RealX) played a set of EVE classics, remixed and remastered

Below: the panel took questions from the floor, some of which were thrown straight back



Nathan 'Owner' Richardssen was often to be found at the business end of a microphone

Above: Hilmar's keynote speech was candid, honest and enlightening

Left: Shin Ra has the Championship fleet in his sights

The EVE stars, naturally, did plenty of [br]isk business

Photography by Tom Atkinson-Edwards

round of the Championship as the 64 entrants were whittled down to 32. It was a fairly engaging spectacle to [illegible], but given that the Championship was a one-on-one event, it would have benefited from having teams rather than solo combatants, as some bouts were only marginally more entertaining than mining in an Impairor. Watching two specks of light briefly tickle each other in the void of space was something most of us could have enjoyed *without* leaving the house.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A definite highlight was the roundtable discussions. I know this because I missed them and everyone I spoke to who attended the cosy, closed-door chats only wished they could have been present for them all. If anyone still believed CCP to be cold and uncommunicative, they only had to witness these convivial meetings to realise that CCP is by far the most open games developer on the planet (I should know, I've met most of them). At these, and all other times, whether at the bar or tucked away in some hidden corner, the developers were accepting and attentive to all who approached.

Such openness was highlighted perfectly on the second day when, in his keynote speech, CCP big cheese, Hilmar, revealed that the company is raking in more than

a million dollars a month from paying customers. Of course we knew this already (75,000 subscribers paying $15 actually comes to just over $1.1m), but to hear a developer treat the event as some kind of shareholders meeting was quite novel; some more business-minded souls would have even considered such candour reckless.

But there was no evidence of corporate frivolity here – the fast cars were well hidden and instead we heard that $100,000 was stumped up for a single, superfast mega disk thing which was installed only the previous day. CCP promised more such devices would be deployed (TMS RAMSAN 400 Solid State Disc Arrays, I think they're called). We heard of plans to recruit more staff (since instigated and with a post on the forum), upgrade to 64-bit hardware and push efforts to upgrade client software in order to solve other hangovers. It has to be remembered that CCP currently employs 60 people and all are devoted to EVE. Most MMOG teams run a skeleton customer support team and instead invest their dev time on new games. In the grand scheme of things $1m is not an awful lot to play with, yet it all goes back into EVE in some form or another. With novels, board games, even feature films a possibility, EVE crossover potential could ensure much greater future revenues, cash that would ensure development would accelerate on all fronts.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?
Loaded with a full cargo of beer and without any fighter escort, *Oveur* braves the elements and Minmatar Alley between the Complex and Auditorium. This nebulous void is populated by wheezing pirates who prey upon any 'carebear hauler' who happens to pass through, especially those of ill-repute.

BEYOND THE RED MOON

Although server performance was something of a hot topic of conversation, the biggest draw was the future of the game itself, and here CCP finally revealed its two-stage plan for Kali. First would come the Red Mo[illegible] released), [illegible] spring (or summer) will follow the [illegible] there [illegible] see of next year's add-on, as all [illegible] on the so[illegible]ns, NPC upgrades, new bloodli[illegible] course the new [illegible] RMR is to provide. Th[illegible]y was t[illegible] one on which [illegible] sights firmly on the fu[illegible]at exte[illegible] beyond t[illegible]ent of the Red Moon e[illegible]

CCP's [illegible], Reynir, followed H[illegible]ance-r[illegible] dish-obs[illegible]te, with a postulating [illegible] design theory of EVE; [illegible] will increase the freedom [illegible] to the player and how on balance, EVE could benefit from the 'theme park' construction of *WoW* and other more constructive MMOs. Despite interruptions from his son, for all the game theorists out there, it was a thought-provoking and revealing insight into EVE's past, present and future.

Lead Designer Kjartan's follow-up lecture went even further. No planet-scudding visuals this year, unfortunately, but a look-ahead to higher levels of socio-military structure and possible ways to further layer the social aspect of EVE with legally-binding agreements, eBay-styled feedback and rewards. Very little was set in stone, but it was clear to all in attendance that CCP still has some very big ideas on the drawing board, perhaps not as visually impressive as Titans, but in effect much more sweeping in their impact on the day-to-day business of all EVE players rather than just the combat-obsessed.

GLORIOUS FUTURE
Proposing in front of a roomful of EVE nerds is something that would, no doubt, earn a slap from any regular spouse-to-be. Here, though, we have two consenting EVE nerds in love, before a room full of EVE nerds and presided over by EVE's ethereal masters. What better venue could there possibly be? Best wishes to them both. Remember guys that under-18s are not allowed at the Fanfest, so one of you may have to stay at home next year to look after the EVElet. And make sure you remind CCP to code some pre-nuptial functionality into the new contracts system...

FEELING BLUE

The Conference finale, rather obviously, was Red Moon. Blue Moon might have been a better moniker given the range of expletives that were uttered by EVE's charismatic Senior Producer Nathan '*Oveur*' Richardsson. Due to its recent deployment, it would here be wasteful to retread what is now old news, suffice to say that the by-now packed gathering whooped for joy at seeing Titans and carriers on screen for the first time.

That was almost it. The panel discussion was little more than a live Insider forum, expertly guided by *kieron*, as ever. Questions were asked on server performance, China plans, Red Moon, Kali and other things. Good questions were answered, bad ones treated with the derision they deserved, and as the proceedings drew to a close we applauded the efforts of ISD and, in particular, *Libertina* (Volunteer of the Year).

A genuine surprise then revealed itself as two antipodean attendees were invited to approach the stage to receive the now traditional gifts for having travelled the furthest to be at the festivities. The Kiwi male of the pair collapsed to his knee, the female clearly surprised, yet thankfully receptive to the proposal of a hangar merger and lifetime non-aggression pact (see *Glorious Future*, above).

RÖXÖRED

The final hours of Fanfest 2005 passed in an alcoholic [illegible] Auditorium closed its doors and the Com[illegible]pened for [illegible] business of music and beer quaffage. F[illegible]d dangerous was too – I'm sure I'm not the only one to p[illegible] thanks to [illegible]cktail sticks), a trio of pretty dam[illegible] be [illegible]hooded Amarrians rocked out to S[illegible] everyo[illegible] their hair down – apart from *kieron* [illegible] lost his and [illegible]tantly organising things, some[illegible]

[illegible]ended for m[illegible] house band, RöXöR, tool[illegible]ge [illegible] CCP card ga[illegible] and trained opera sing[illegible], his [illegible], Vince[illegible] on guitar, Reynir on [illegible]ng his [illegible] of rock [illegible]mmensely), Kjartan Ki[illegible]n drum [illegible]an play[illegible]ordion (yes, an accord[illegible] then t[illegible] [illegible]d (not f[illegible]time) we were in the p[illegible] truly unique [illegible] develo[illegible]at can not only create the greatest game, but one that can pump out a perfectly [illegible]cceptable rendition of *Gay Bar* [illegible] without fear of [illegible]

embarrassing themselves. I collected my things, bade a fond farewell to those I had met and set off into the night. It was cold, really freezing actually, and I was suddenly very skint. As I wandered back to the hotel on foot, I pondered the eBay worth of my ultra-rare Press pass should I be required to self-finance a return trip in 2006.

Unpretentious, friendly and fun, the EVE Fanfest is a rare event in the modern games industry; putting faces to names you see daily in space and on forums just enforces the fact that EVE is a social game where friendships are forged on a level that exceeds the capabilities of any other virtual world. I wondered on the plane back to Blighty, Iceland receding rapidly behind me, whether in 30, 40 or 50 years EVE veterans will return to the land of fire and ice as might a war veteran to the beaches of Normandy; a gaggle of grey-haired geeks with EVE holo-stickers plastered across their hoverchairs, moaning about the cold and the price of beer, and loving every minute of it. One wonders, too, how many skillpoints one might have amassed by then?

Skillpoints!?

Shit!

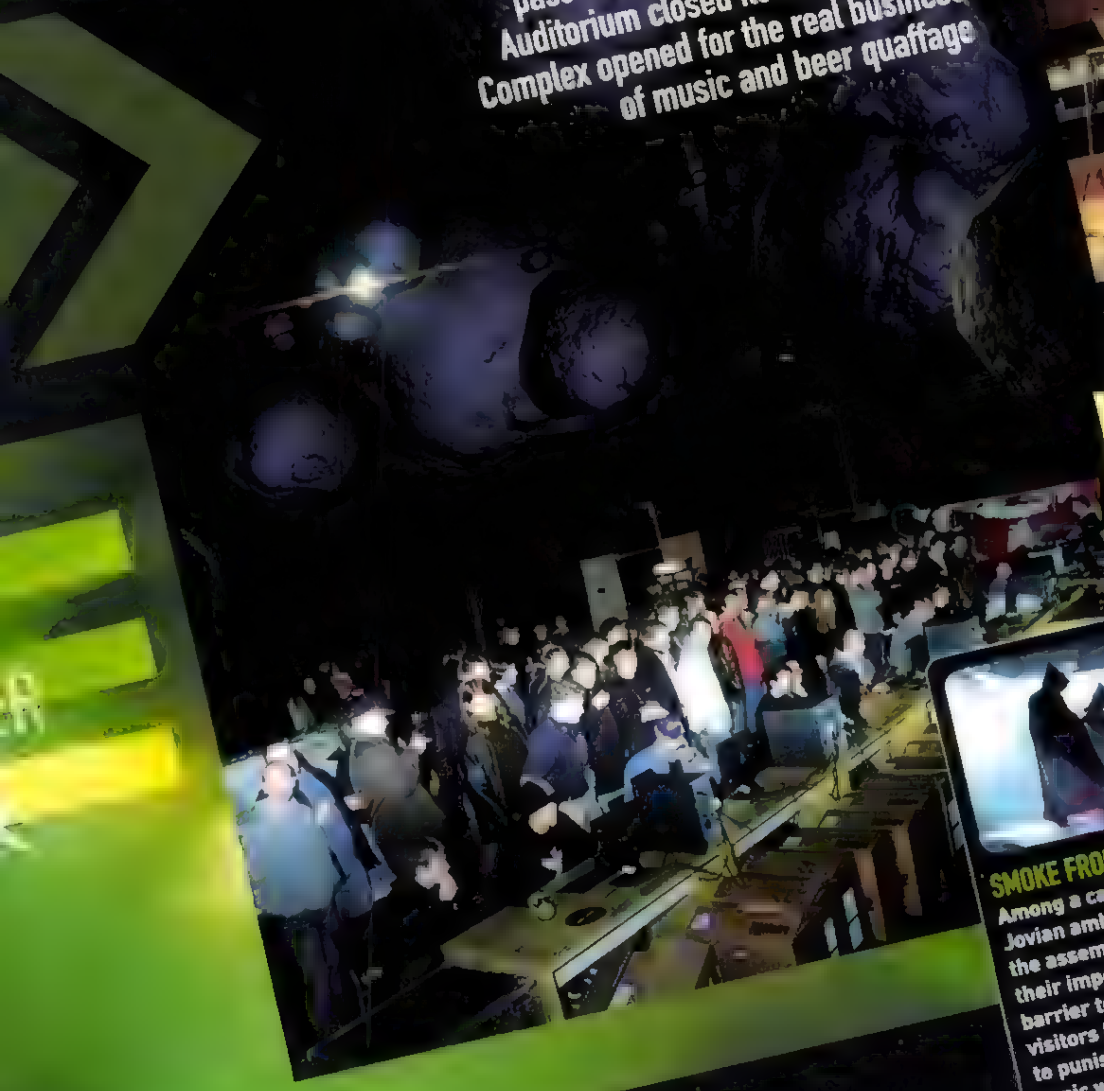
SURPLUS OF RARE ARTIFACTS

The subject webbed and locked by a hovering GM, *Lacrimae kieron* of his hairy aft shields. Within a few seconds of precision clipping, he was left with little but a shining egg. Latest reports suggest his shields have now partially regenerated.

The final hours of Fanfest 2005 passed in an alcoholic blur as the Auditorium closed its doors and the Complex opened for the real business of music and beer quaffage

Left: competition was fierce in the Complex as the one-on-one Championship began.

Above: *Shin Ra* is crowned EVE Champion and as a reward receives the prototype Brutix model as seen in E-ON issue #001



SMOKE FROM DOWN BELOW

Among a cacophony of light and sound, two Jovian ambassadors arrive to converse with the assembled delegates. Unfortunately, their impenetrable language proves to be a barrier to any cordial discussion and the visitors become quickly agitated, electing to punish the assembled pilots with their sonic wave devices.

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

FROM THE DARKEST DEPTHS OF THE FRONTIER TO THE ENLIGHTENENED HEART OF EMPIRE SPACE, EVE HIDES MANY SECRETS, HOARDS MANY RICHES AND ENTRUSTS THEM ONLY TO THE MOST TENACIOUS

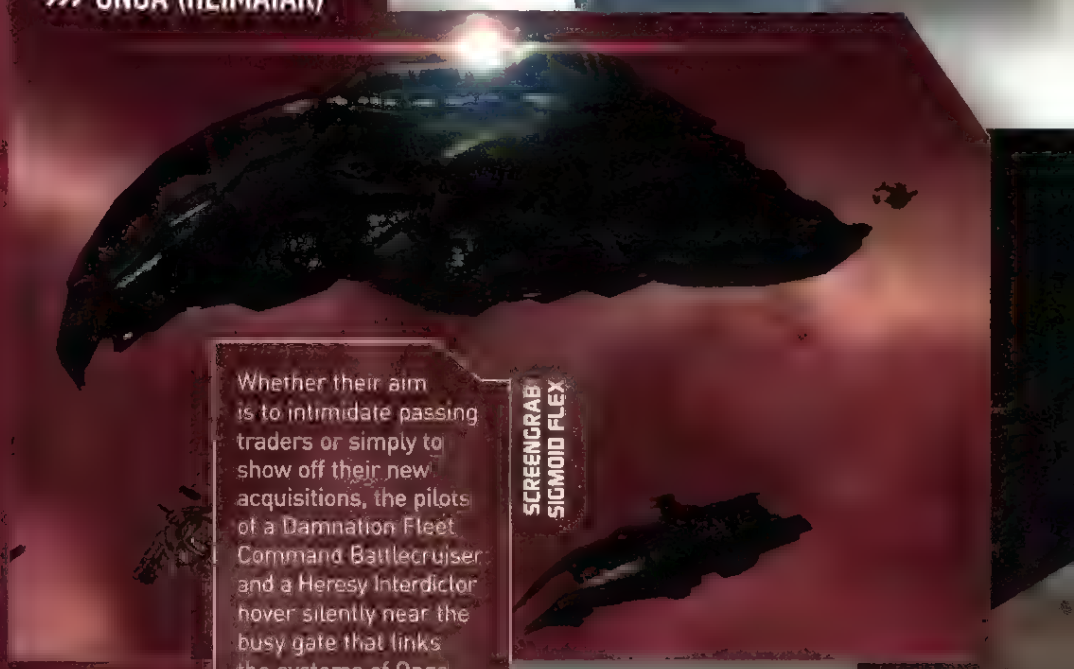
IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT A POSTCARD FOR CONSIDERATION IN A FUTURE EDITION OF *E-ON*, PLEASE VISIT WWW.EVE-ONLINE/EON/GUIDELINES

>>> PF-346 (SYNDICATE)

SCREENGRAB: SAINE

Before Dreadnoughts are taken to frontline positions, many new owners tend to stress-test their vessels against small raider fleets comprised of friendly ships. They are always disappointed at its performance when faced with such targets, but the veteran capital ship captain knows well the strengths of these behemoths when they are deployed against starbases and can rely on the support of a balanced fleet.

>>> ONGA (HEIMATAR)



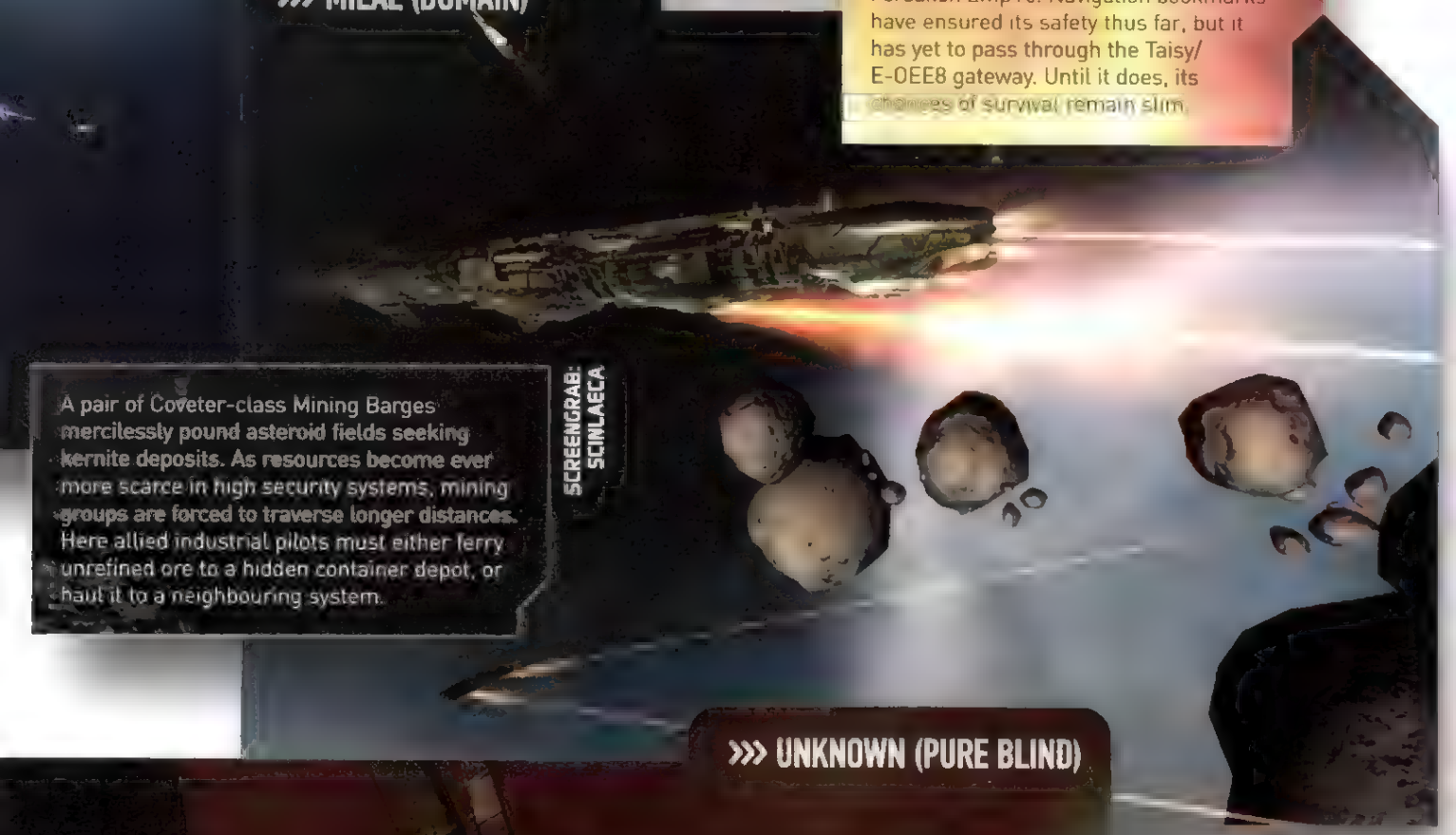
SCREENGRAB: SIGMOID FLEX

Whether their aim is to intimidate passing traders or simply to show off their new acquisitions, the pilots of a Damnation Fleet Command Battlecruiser and a Heresy Interdictor hover silently near the busy gate that links the systems of Onga and Rens.

>>> JAN (LONETREK)

A Mammoth-class Industrial ship, carrying much needed supplies for its employer operating covertly in enemy-held space, risks annihilation as it travels alone and without permission towards regions claimed by The Forsaken Empire. Navigation bookmarks have ensured its safety thus far, but it has yet to pass through the Taisy/E-OEE8 gateway. Until it does, its chances of survival remain slim.

>>> MILAL (DOMAIN)



SCREENGRAB: SCINLAECA

A pair of Coveter-class Mining Barges mercilessly pound asteroid fields seeking kernite deposits. As resources become ever more scarce in high security systems, mining groups are forced to traverse longer distances. Here allied industrial pilots must either ferry unrefined ore to a hidden container depot, or haul it to a neighbouring system.

>>> UNKNOWN (PURE BLIND)

SCREENGRAB: ICARUS STARKILLER

A harrowing encounter with vastly superior forces is followed by a mad, blind dash for safety for this lone surviving Rifter pilot. His navigation systems are dead, he does not know where he is nor where he's running to, but anywhere is better than in enemy crosshairs.

RÚNAR THORARINSSON

CCP STARTDATE: August 2004
POSITION: Game Designer
AKA: 'Skellibjalla'

WHEN CCP STARTED DEVELOPING EVE ONLINE IT HAD NO EXPERIENCE OF CREATING GAMES. WHEN RÚNAR THORARINSSON STARTED AT CCP HE HAD EXPERIENCE COMING OUT OF HIS EARS. RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING COMPLEXES AND THE NEW PLAYER EXPERIENCE, HE'S PUT IT TO GOOD USE TOO. AND HE PLAYS A MEAN GUITAR...

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What do you listen to?
My absolute favourites are Robert Johnson, Metallica, Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix. Mozart is my favourite classical composer. Prodigy is really, the only thing that appeals to me from that genre and the same goes for Eminem (who I think is amazing). In terms of Icelandic music, I am listening to Hjálmar, Mugison, Bjork and some of Sigur Rós's stuff.

Favourite films?
Lord of the Rings, without any competition.

Favourite artists?
How can I answer this, when I see little difference between science and art sometimes. Who is the greatest artist? Stephen Hawking, Leonardo Da Vinci, Virgil or Robert Johnson? Honestly!

What books are currently reading?
I have recently read Thorbergur Thordarson's *Bréf til Láru* which should be compulsory reading for everyone between the ages of 16 and 20 – not sooner and not later. Currently I am reading *Paradisarheimt* by our nobel laureate, Halldor Laxness. I have not read it before, which is shameful.

Favourite computer and/or video games?
Ultima IV, the *Civilization* series, *Black Magic, Doom... EverQuest* was great to play for the first couple of years and *Betrayal at Krondor* deserves a mention for it's outstanding story.

Portrait: Thorsteinn Marinó / www.mage.is

What were you doing before you joined CCP?
I graduated from the University of Tromso in 2001 with a degree in literature, which is extremely valuable education in my line of work – unbelievable as it may sound. Prior to that I wrote the only two role-playing games that exist in Icelandic, *Askur Yggdrasils* (1994 with Jon H. Thorarinsson) and *Fræknir FerðAlangar* (1997) which is a role-playing game for children. Between my graduation and my employment at CCP I worked at Funcom. To begin with I was engrossed in reviving *Anarchy Online's* reeking, bugridden corpse. I started working there only three months after its disastrous launch, ploughing through broken tools and fragmented designs. Working with some very dedicated people, the remnants of the *AO* team, and successfully saving that game from immediate doom was an astonishing feat and an incredible learning curve for me to go through. From that point of view it was good, but I would not wish it upon my worst enemy. After I had redesigned the New Player Experience there and the tutorial (which sadly was never implemented), I worked on *Notum Wars* and *Shadowlands* before heading home to Iceland with a pregnant wife.

After *Anarchy*, working on EVE must've been quite relaxing?
The design for the static complexes in EVE was the first thing I designed when I started here, and they are never far from my thoughts. As with most things that are new (or revolutionary, as these space-dungeons are), they require constant touching up and tweaking. But, it is the NPE (New Player Experience) that has been my primary focus point. I wrote the design for that with our only female designer, Maria Gudmundsdottir, and it was a staggering effort. Its realization drew on the forces of virtually every developer within CCP, probably most of all on our UI programmers, Friggi and Hagen. In my mind it is the most important task I have ever worked on anywhere, dwarfing the deadspace complexes. Our task was to make the seemingly complex EVE Online be exposed for what it really is – a very deep and mature game, with a solid base design which is simple in its incredible complexity. No small task! But it has been thrilling – from the moment our CEO said to us "EVE is in your hands" to the moment Aura, the ship's computer, said "You have done great. Thank you!" It was absolutely amazing.

What does a typical working day involve?
A million and one things. The first order of the day is always to check emails and click all the depraved and sleazy links sent to our spam-mailing list, mostly by the other designers, people in QA and our production manager. It is absolutely primary. After a cup of coffee and a breath of fresh air out on the balcony, taking in some inspiration from the charming shipyard it overlooks, I simply get down to attacking whatever is at hand.

A typical day always contains a 'surprise element' – you never know what idea you, or others, might get, an idea which might end up as the next big thing for an upcoming expansion. CCP actively encourages such involvement from everyone, which is a satisfying feeling and indeed necessary for a company like CCP to remain dynamic and productive.

How have things changed since you joined the company?
So much has changed actually. We have moved to a much bigger and better office, about 20 more people work here than before. External changes include the Icelandic government, which is busily exposing itself as a redundant, fossilised dinosaur incapable of supporting Iceland's high-tech industry in the competitive global market. CCP is currently the country's most valuable software developer and now that we are a glimmering success, we are like the prettiest girl around everyone is asking us out. It changes a lot to get lucrative offers from abroad when your own governement is struggling to compete with them

How involved are you in conceptualising new game features?
My involvement depends entirely on the design. I do not waste time commenting on things I know nothing about if I do not have time to delve into them when they arise. Where I can contribute, I do, and that involvement ranges from 'a little' to 'a lot'. I feel that my education in literary criticism helps a lot with identifying and exposing any lack of clarity here and there. Sometimes, what seems to be entirely obvious is not obvious at all, but nobody knows until you put it in words. For sure it irritates my boss and coworkers a lot, but someone has to be the itch they can not reach

Are there any aspects of EVE that particularly irritate you?
Probably losing a unique Tech II ship in which I had invested everything (it was fitted with the best modules), and then immediately being podded with a head full of +4s and an old clone in medical, the next private stash miles from anywhere, then waking to find that my corporation hangars had been robbed to depletion and my corporation wallet cleared by the people I had grown to trust and rely on for many months, people I considered my best friends. Ironically, it is also the reason I would come back to EVE – to take revenge! In EVE this is the reality of our unreal lives. It happens, as any player will tell you, and it is an integral and unique part of the game. If you can't lose, you can't win. That is the simple truth

Do you play much EVE yourself – for fun?
I do play EVE, and yes, for fun. I just started a new skill training as a matter of fact, but my time is limited. And I have no time for other MMOGs now, that is for sure. I have a number of accounts in other games, like *EverQuest*, *World of Warcraft* and *Anarchy Online*, but I have absolutely zero time to play. I partake in occasional operations for my corp in EVE, but that's it. Almost nobody knows who my playing character is, and those that do, understand that if I were to play like I used to, I would have no time for the rest of my life I work a lot, you see.

You seemed to you enjoy yourself during the RöXöR gig...
I loved playing the RöXöR gig! The number of people that play instruments at CCP is astounding – we even have two very competent drummers, which is totally amazing. As anyone who's tried to put a band together will know, the chances of finding all its members from a company of just 55 people is pretty slim. It's honestly hard to say which were more enjoyable, the practices or the gig itself, but I think I would have to go with the gig. There was so much alcohol consumed at the band practices that a few ended in a hazy daze blaze. But that's just Icelandic

Will there be any more performances, a record deal perhaps?
Yeah – a World Tour in 2006, loads of record companies fighting over us, stadium shows, groupies, an endless booze fest - a real LedZep lifestyle! Seriously, we might actually play again, and I think it's been sort of decided that we'll do another gig at next year's Fanfest. Someone was even talking about doing a gig in England. Since I can shamelessly abuse E-ON I will, and plug my band, Trassar, which is making a record next year. And we're freaking awesome, of course! Goes without saying

TELEMICUS THRACE

PLAYER PROFILE	
NAME	Telemicus Thrace
CORPORATION	Thrace Inc [.T.]
POSITION	CEO/Founder
ALLIANCE	Elechus Matari [-EM-]
SPECIALITY	Covert Operations, Haulage
SECURITY RATING	0.3
MOST LIKELY TO SAY	"Stay frosty out there, I have a burning need to get paid this week"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY	"I'm sure they are decent folk deep down, let's dump the cargo like they said"

Sitting in a homely bar held snug within the walls of the Republic Security Services Station in Alakgur, Telemicus Thrace weaves his hands around a glass of Matari whiskey, leaning forward across the table, not to impose himself as many corporate leaders might do, but to ensure he is heard above the din. Outside, in the factory workshops, the construction of a Tempest-class battleship is in progress, a mundane undertaking for many established corporations perhaps, but a significant one for Thrace Inc.

Having only graduated from the Pator Tech School a few months ago, by his own admission Telemicus Thrace is not a big player in the world of EVE. He talks relentlessly, however, and with genuine passion – making sure every chapter of his story is heard. And it's a long story; for in a short space of time Thrace has travelled many roads to get to where it is today and has quickly settled on a route that is both profitable and challenging.

"The road less travelled is where a small operation can thrive and that is where we are, well away from the herd," smiles Thrace. "Rushing in to do the same thing as everyone else is always going to end in disaster, or, at best, lacklustre results."

WOLF PACK

Thrace Inc is a small mining and manufacturing operation, staffed by long-time friends most of the elite class would haughtily consider to be inexperienced at best. Thrace and his colleagues know their limitations well, yet, just as in business, in combat their modest means can project impressive results.

"We are not a corporation geared toward full-scale combat," he admits "but I have always understood that a bear can be brought down by a pack of wolves so I have never felt the need to aim for the biggest and most expensive ships. A small group of cruisers is easily a match for a battleship and much cheaper to replace."

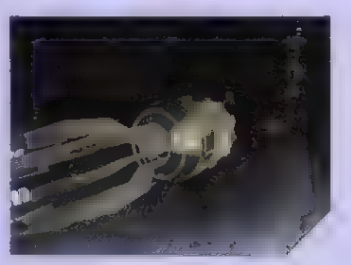
VICIOUS CYCLE

Currently, Thrace Inc seems to be doing well, despite only being in operation for a few months. Revenues exceed that of Thrace's previous corporation, mining yields are increasing and the production line is going strong.

However, whilst he celebrates his own modest ambitions, Telemicus Thrace is less impressed with those alliances that seek to hold tight to the frontier systems.

"The major alliances out on the rim could, I feel, do a lot more to build some real infrastructure. In my experience, once you leave Empire space you are entering a wasteland. In all the cases I have explored I see large fleets that simply use the resources of the rim to build fleets to stop anybody else getting out there. It is a cycle without merit, to my mind. To build an outpost, encourage trade, give out mining contracts, attempt to maintain security rather than shooting at everything that moves – that is something I would see value in fighting for. Looking at the work of the ISS and the more compact alliances, I suspect there are many that feel the same way as myself and, perhaps, we will start to see some real frontier spirit out there."

Serenity Station was Thrace's attempt to build a starbase in 0.0 space, but the security costs were crippling



Rushing in to do the same thing as everyone else is always going to end in disaster, or, at best, lacklustre results

LEARNING FAST

Of his own success as a pilot, Thrace has always been aware that to compete with the long-standing veterans he's had to specialise, and having had to haul minerals through systems choked with pirates has made him not only accomplished at the helm of an industrial ship, but a cunning scout. It's an impressive fact that Thrace has been on point for a number of convoys between Pure Blind and Heimatar and has yet to lose any ships in his care to a blockade.

Despite the financial failures of trying to maintain a starbase in Pure Blind, an endeavour that soaked up almost the entire financial reserves of his previous corp and decimated what little was left thanks to a steady loss of ships, Thrace has learnt many lessons from the experience.

"If I hadn't bothered with all the exploring, with freight running and the crazy attempts to get rich quick out in 0.0, I would be far richer." He smiles. "But that wouldn't have been any fun, and besides, I have enough ISK now and I have skills and experience many of my peers do not have simply because they never went further than Rens. That is a form of riches far more valuable than just currency."

After four hours, a short lifetime remembered and an entire bottle of Old Pator, Thrace stands to leave the Bar & Grill that bears his name. The hour is late and an early start beckons. "Right, now I'm going to sleep off this drink and then get back in my barge. I still haven't made my ore quota this week and that Tempest out there won't build itself."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THE EIGHTH PLAGUE

NEW FICTION BY TOM CZERNIAWSKI

A brass bell's vibrant toll resounded through the arching hallways of the University of St. Maxus, heralding a brief mid-course recess. Every door in the sprawling academic complex burst open in unison, spilling forth a crowd of chattering students, each encumbered by an armload of hefty books and manuscripts, but no doubt excited by the approaching semester's end. While the University was one of many such scholarly institutions littered about the Amarr Empire's capital city of Dam-Torsad, it was surely one of its most illustrious – the students enrolled here were likely to be sons and daughters of Holders or respected officers in the Amarr Navy; resplendent in their royal blue scholar's robes, they certainly looked the part. Graduates could expect promising careers in theology, planetary administration, and engineering everything from new starships to combat drones.

"I pray the other courses on my schedule are more exciting than that drudgery. You haven't the slightest inkling how difficult it was to convince father to enrol me here," shouted Rhea Tash-Murkon over the din of the crowd, directing her exclamation at a harried-looking classmate who had only now elbowed his way free of the throng emerging from the Administrative Affairs auditorium. The two had just suffered through a tedious three-hour lecture given by a professor inclined to speak in drowsy monotone.

"This next class should pique your interest!" replied her robed acquaintance, Aramin Ankigher, the first-born son of a renowned Domain region Holder. "The professor has a reputation for decidedly liberal slants in his teaching; if we're not wary with our notes we may be arrested and tried for techno-heresy!" he quipped, smirking. As the daughter of a minor noble, Rhea was likely quite sheltered, and Aramin had quickly deduced that the University was her first taste of the real world beyond the walls of her father's guarded fortress-estates. Today was only her third day of classes, and the Holder's son found that he was drawn to her; perhaps, instinctively drawn to her power and influence.

Having navigated the halls, Rhea and Aramin came to stand before a set of ornate double doors. "*The Nature and Theological Implications of Artificial Intelligence*," Aramin recited helpfully, reading from a sign by the door. "Here we are."

Professor Salah-Udin Bohat sat seemingly distracted at his pulpit, poring over a sheaf of papers, his hands rubbing away at his temples. Surrounding him were a number of plaques and framed diplomas attesting to the aged professor's many doctorates in schools of cognition coding, robotic bio-integration and neuromechanical interface engineering. As students began to flood through the doors into his audience hall, he gathered the documents up, and greeted the dozen-odd robed scholars with a warm smile and a humble bow. His eyes came to rest on Rhea.

"I see we have a new face in the crowd!" the professor announced, his voice echoing throughout the lecture hall. "Everyone, please extend courteous greetings to mistress Rhea Tash-Murkon, first daughter of the esteemed noble Rhodon Tash-Murkon, whose influence in the Empire stretches far and wide. Wide enough, it appears, to circumvent university regulations against the admission of students mid-semester," he cracked, still smiling that disarming smile, prompting Rhea to blush furiously as the classroom's attention momentarily focused on her.

"Don't worry about him," whispered Aramin, reading her embarrassment and leaning toward Rhea from his desk. "The professor possesses a great sense of humour."

Professor Bohat moved to the wide chalkboard behind his pulpit, and picked up a piece of chalk. While quickly scribbling cognition formulae on the chalkboard, he resumed speaking. "In our prior weeks' study sessions, we delved into the vagaries and perils of cognitive code; specifically, the risks and heresies associated with creating self-aware machinery. However, as our final examinations lie in the near future, and we have a new student in our midst, I felt it prudent to review past study material in hopes of refreshing everyone's memories. At the end of today's class, I have a *very* exciting announcement regarding the revised format of our final examination, which I have taken the liberty of re-organizing from written to practical in order to allow our new student to participate."

Rhea smiled haughtily to Aramin. Often, her over-protective father's meddling was a source of constant humiliation for the Tash-Murkon girl who sought to strike it out on her own and earn her glory. Exerting his influence to help her obtain this course credit with a fraction of the study time, however, was something she'd have to thank him for

With a hand-held laser, Professor Bohat highlighted a portion of his chalkboard schematics, specifically a column of nigh-indecipherable text and numbers written in impressive calligraphy. "Who among you can identify this code segment?" he queried his class.

Aramin's hand shot up before anyone else's. "That is the Fourth Law; it states that machine must always defer to man in its decision making processes. It is an override and governs a machine's primary functions when invoked."

"And this?"

Another student answered. "That is the Ninth and final Law of Machine Cognition. It states, uh… it states that a machine must never seek to know itself. And, uh…" The lad flipped anxiously through his notes, looking for the rest of his answer.

The professor was quick to note his pupil's lack of preparedness. "What phenomenon does the Ninth Law strive to guard against?" Aramin's hand went up again, but Bohat ignored him, his attention focused on the fumbling student. Memory implants were prohibited in universities, and scholars relied on rote repetition to hammer knowledge into their minds.

"Retardation?" The student blurted, clearly guessing.

"Incorrect. Rampancy! Rampancy is the phenomenon that the Ninth Law guards against, and is the invariable result of machine self-awareness. Retardation, on the other hand, is the phenomenon affecting any student unable to recite the Nine Laws this far into the course, and I'll expect the full definition of the Ninth Law written down by your hand a hundred-fold, on my desk by the end of class," announced the professor while triumphantly stabbing at his pulpit with his index finger, delighted as the wayward student shrivelled in his seat and set to his task.

"Now, for something a bit more challenging: who can tell me who Radagast Bohat was?"

Again, Aramin's hand went up. Grudgingly, the professor nodded to his eager star pupil, and Aramin spoke, reciting from memory. "Radagast Bohat was the first ever Amarr drone engineer to collaborate with foreigners. He travelled to the Gallente Federation, where he toiled alongside the heathen scientist Oisin Lexmoreau. His crowning achievement turned out to be his undoing, as the two gave life to *Orphyx*, the first drone ever to attain awareness and go rampant. Radagast was charged with techno-heresy and disappeared shortly after *Orphyx* broke loose from its containment. It is thought that he committed suicide."

The professor nodded approvingly, and turned back to the chalkboard.

"And he was your grandfather."

Salah-Udin Bohat spun around on his heel, genuine surprise registering upon his face. The entire class now looked as though it were uncomfortably trying to distance itself in embarrassment from Rhea Tash-Murkon, whose almost

Radagast was charged with techno-heresy and disappeared shortly after *Orphyx* broke loose from its containment. It is thought that he committed suicide

accusatory addendum to Aramin's reply shocked even the distinguished professor. Many in the class tacitly knew this fact, but their standing in rigidly hierarchical Amarr society meant they did not dare mention it. Of them all, only Rhea possessed the luxury of royal blood and the privileges of directness it entailed.

The professor continued: "Very good, Rhea. I'm frankly quite impressed! The fact that the heretic Radagast Bohat is in my family line has brought me no end of shame; however, it is no dark secret – it even appears in your textbooks. For long I have wondered why none of you brought it up until now!"

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>>> Begin Amarr Navy Encoded Communication
relay:reg.domain/con.tandoiras/sys.tannakan
relayShip: AN Apocalypse 'Balance of Judgement'
relayCapt: Vice Admiral Uriah Bathrim
verifyShip: AN Apocalypse 'Mount Golgotha'
verifyCapt: Captain Kalo Tirasekhar
beginMsg: Emrg. transmission. Large drone hive detected approaching Tannakan system on unkn. vector. Course appears to originate from beyond known systems. Hive designated 'Eighth Plague' for mapping purposes. Scans indicate hive to be an agglomeration of at least eleven large ships, of which two are Imperial and two are of unknown origin. Multiple distinct power signatures FTL capacity detected. Not gate capable. Course projections indicate hive will encroach upon populated sectors within two weeks. Cannot underestimate threat to population. Advise travellers to avoid approach. Request additional naval units within next week to engage and purge this foul threat to our trade lanes and colonies.

His light be with you,
VADM Uriah Bathrim
endTrans: OK
recvConfirm: OK

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"That brings us to the end of this class. Go with God." The professor smiled, and began wiping down his chalkboard with a damp rag.

"Are you not forgetting something, professor?"

"Yes, the announcement!"

Bohat nodded, suddenly grinning widely. "Forgive this old man's absent-mindedness, I'd forget the scriptures themselves if they weren't burnt into my memories. Now then, the announcement!"

Although the bell had already rung and precious few minutes remained until their next classes, the students gathered excitedly around the professor, who eagerly retrieved the documents he had busied himself with a few hours prior. Placing them flat against a projector, he flipped the machine on, casting a holographic blow-up of a declassified Amarr Navy memo into the midst of the class.

"Class, behold the Eighth Plague. Named so after the plague of locusts, it is one of the largest and structurally intriguing rogue drone hives ever recorded. Our glorious Navy is currently tracking Eighth Plague's progress toward the core of Empire space – at the moment it is in Tannakan, and they have scheduled its destruction a week from now."

"What does this abomination have to do with our final exam, professor?" queried Aramin.

"That abomination… *is* your final exam, my dear Aramin. I did say it would be practical, not written, didn't I?" The professor winked slyly.

The students around him went ashen-faced in a heartbeat. Respected teaching institutions such as the University of St. Maxus were notorious for throwing their students into combat internships aboard vessels of the line, or apprenticeships under slave labour camp overseers, in a bid to equip them with real-world experience. To the best of the students' knowledge however, hurling themselves into the maw of hell itself had never before entered the curriculum.

"A drone hive? We're going near a *drone hive*?" The fear made Aramin's voice quiver slightly.

Class, behold the Eighth Plague. Named so after the plague of locusts, it is one of the largest and structurally intriguing rogue drone hives ever recorded

"Better. We're going *inside* a drone hive. I have scheduled an expedition the likes of which will be remembered and celebrated in history books. I endeavour this to be something akin to a biology field trip. As the hulk is at least partly comprised of Amarr vessels, we will use any compatible docking hatches to enter the hive. We will penetrate to the depths of the central hulk, and capture as many functioning specimens of mecha-fauna as we can carry out with us. Yes, it is ambitious; yes, it is undeniably dangerous as well – but imagine the prestige and respect you will garner as scholars and researchers! The first men and women of God to pierce the heart of darkness!"

"This is nothing short of madness, professor," Rhea was becoming accustomed to her directness, yet she too was beaming with excitement. "Although I myself would readily hazard this expedition, I sincerely doubt my father would approve of me going."

"Then why not invite him along as a chaperone? I am certain a man of your father's considerable influence can provide a few able-bodied men to guard you, and the whole expedition would benefit in turn from their protection." The professor's eyes glimmered with hope, and Rhea found herself rapidly acquiescing. Now she would only have to find a way to convince her father to go along.

"How in God's name do we get to Tannakan? None of us are captains," interrupted Aramin.

The professor's face became creased with trepidation. "That *is* a good question. Suffice to say, the Amarr Navy turned down my humble request for transport to the Eighth Plague. They don't want to go near it. I doubt even our new classmate's esteemed father can find an Imperial captain willing to embark on so perilous a journey. I fear I will have to look to freelancers to provide us passage to the Bleak Lands."

"Passage is one thing," mumbled Aramin weakly, uncomfortably tugging at his robe's collar. "How precisely do we plan to survive more than a minute inside a drone hive?"

"All covered in your tuition fees, brave Aramin!" retorted the professor sardonically, growing weary of the young Holder's overt cowardice. "As you well know, among my *many* doctorates lies a degree in xenotechnology, and I have studied these vile beasts for the better part of my life – I know them well. My research indicates that the drones inside a hive have simply not evolved electromagnetic shielding – ergo, a compact magnetic field generator which I have already obtained will be our impenetrable aegis, wiping the exposed memory drives of any hive drones that stray near our expedition… We will, of course, have exploration suits to protect us from the hostile environs within the hive, and conventional weapons carried by kind Rhea's guards should cover us the rest of the way, I should imagine."

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"You want me to fly you *WHERE*?"

Mebrithiel Ju'wien nearly spat a mouth-full of chewed food in the face of the blue-robed Amarr gentleman standing before her. Moments ago he had approached her in the middle of her meal with a proposal that left her wide-eyed in disbelief. The old Amarr was considerably more daring than most Imperial citizens here on Oris station; most generally preferred to give the known Blood Inquisition captain Ju'wien a wide berth.

Professor Bohat repeated himself, his face frozen in a mask of unnerving calm. "I would like to inquire regarding chartering you to transport my expedition to the Eighth Plague drone hive in Tannakan system."

"Got a death wish, then. I suppose I can respect that," deadpanned Mebrithiel, digging hungrily into her dinner. "How much does it pay?"

"Ten million for the round trip. Half up front, half when you extract us."

"Oh, no, no. You want to commit suicide, you pay me everything up front – I ain't gonna wait around outside one of those things for you to get finished up, on the odd chance you'll come back out alive, for a piss-weak five million!" The attractive outlaw

eyed the old Amarr mischievously, trying to mask the fact that she was utterly incapable of deciphering his bizarre motives. It wasn't every day, she mused, you get hired to fly a university professor, a royal noble and a passenger hold full of university students to the one goddamned place in this universe even Blooders would not tread.

"Very well." The professor's answer came fast, as if he had given it no thought, or thought about it quickly. Obviously the risk of Mebrithiel stranding them on the hive and running with their money did not weigh heavily on his conscience. "Do you have a cloak-capable vessel?"

"Yep. Wouldn't take this gig if I didn't!"

"Excellent. I expect you to pick up my expedition four hours from now, sharp. I shall make payment upon disembarking at the Eighth Plague hive."

"Can I ask why you're doing this?"

"You can not."

He turned to leave without another word, and Mebrithiel followed the sagely robed man with her eyes. "Freak," she whispered to no one in particular, resuming her meal.

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Eight students were all that remained of professor Bohat's class – the rest electing to withdraw from the course altogether, self-preservation taking precedence over a course credit, much to the professor's chagrin. Aramin and Rhea remained, the latter staying close to her father and his guards. Rhodon Tash-Murkon looked quite cross in his gleaming tactical armour, flanked by two burly Kameiras clad in the same. The noble was indeed displeased, shanghaied by his daughter into a ridiculous scientific expedition. Unlike the students, however, there was no fear in his eyes. He had faced far worse in combat than calculators with legs.

All of the students were clad in industrial black-and-yellow plasteel exploration suits. The professor's suit possessed a bulky backpack, which rumbled with a steady hum, tugging at the Kameiras' steel close quarters weapons by means of the intense magnetic field it generated. In addition to the cruel hooked knives slung to their belts, the Kameiras carried an assortment of long rifles and explosive charges. They were prepared to take on an army, save for one crucial component of their battle plan.

"Honoured professor," muttered Rhodon Tash-Murkon gruffly, "the transport you hired is late by 15 minutes." The group glanced to the empty glide-bay where Mebrithiel Ju'wien was chartered to pick them up.

"Wrong!" The girl's voice came from behind them. They turned to face Mebrithiel, Aramin's jaw dropping and his interest in Rhea rapidly abating. "I'm already here," she continued, raising a small remote control to the glide-bay. A hitherto invisible Anathema frigate shimmered into existence before their eyes, its massive forward prong materializing no more than a few feet away from the Kameiras, startling them considerably.

"All aboard, geeks!" she chirped, bounding for the captain's hatch. The passenger compartment slid open soon afterward, and the 12 expeditionaries boarded Mebrithiel's covert ops ship. For all its mass, it sagged slightly in the serene suspension of the anti-gravity hangar under the added weight of Rhodon and the Kameiras' bulky tactical armour.

Soon, they were away, steadily rocking with the to-and-fro acceleration-deceleration of alternating warps and jumps. The students' worries had abated somewhat at the sight of Rhodon's guards, the mere thrill of having left the Amarr system for the first time in their lives, and crossing interstellar space sufficient to bring them out of their shells. Now they conversed in lively fashion, discussing their destination.

"So professor, you stated the drones inside a hive are not shielded; why is that?" As always, Aramin hungered for knowledge.

The professor thought for a moment. "To answer this question I should first enlighten you as to the nature of these loathsome contraptions. I trust you recall *Orphyx*, the first rampant drone we discussed in class? Since then, a number of similar accidents have occurred across the universe, borne largely of man's arrogance and folly in attempting to traipse upon God's domain in creating new life. Some of these rampant drones were self-replicating constructors; some were even autonomous starships with factory facilities, such as the *Magnus*, which broke free of a Gallente shipyard a decade ago and simply vanished into parts unknown."

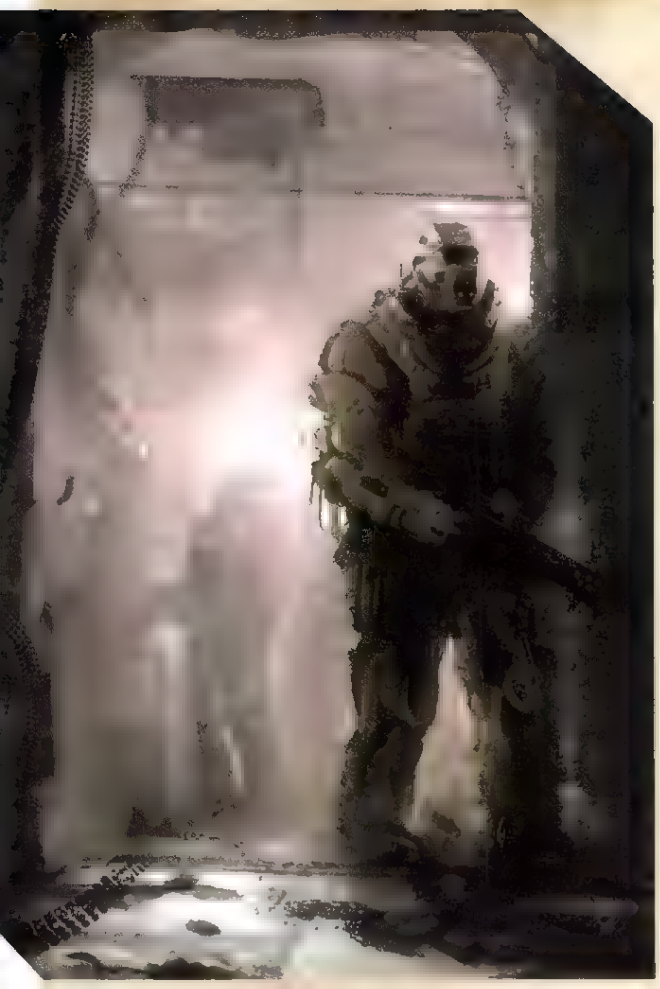
The professor fiddled with a control pad on his forearm, and continued. "Now, it has been many decades since these drones were corrupted – incredibly, since then, they have been evolving at an astonishing pace. They apply the incomprehensible logic of sentient machines to give rise to new and blasphemous sub-species so far deviated from the human engineering that birthed their progenitors as to be unrecognizable. The drones you read about on Gal-net, the space borne strains, I enjoy likening to terrestrial land mammals – and as you well know, terrestrial land mammals are but a fraction of the wildly diverse life forms that populate our universe. Indeed, I have researched up-close examples of drones no bigger than a molecule, and heard tales of ambulatory thousand-legged behemoths larger than an Apocalypse class battleship. There are demented, drifting machine-minds cobbled together from the AIs of a dozen starships; there are miniscule parasite drones that infest living tissue in a manner much akin to bacteria and bacilli. In the time since their escape, they have evolved into an obscene pantheon of beasts so diverse and twisted, that they tax the sanity of men attempting to understand them to breaking point. So, to answer your question, the reason drones inside a hive are not shielded, is that they simply have no need to be, at least as far as the drones are concerned – if they did, you can be sure they would have evolved the requisite technology by now."

"I wager they'll evolve that technology after we're through with them," announced Rhodon boisterously, patting Rhea on the shoulder in an attempt to instil his daughter with confidence. Her haughty demeanour clearly took origin from the father's side of her family.

"Indeed, esteemed noble, it is quite likely that they will," replied the professor. "Since there has never been an intrusion upon the interior of a drone hive, it is an eventuality the beasts have simply not prepared for."

After a few star systems of silence, Rhea spoke up. "Professor, you speak of understanding drones, which brings up a question… do drones understand humanity? Do they even know we exist?"

"Terrifyingly, yes. In my experience with captured specimens, drones appear to be possessed of a low intellect akin to that of lesser beasts. In the absence of instinct, which drives animals, they have insight – a trait we humans had monopolized until the unfortunate events of the last century. Drones see humans as a Syrikos hound might look upon a plains raptor – a competing species that shares their natural habitat, that being interstellar space. Now, there are rumours that in recent times, rogue drones have commenced capturing not only starships, but live pilots also; if one were to believe these tall tales, they claim capsuleers are the drones' favourite morsel to devour, something to do with the neural sockets such captains possess.



So, while severely limited, they *do* have insight into man. But enough of these campfire stories, everyone – your resolve and bravery is most admirable, and I shall not dare to rattle your nerves so close to our expedition. You have made me proud this day."

"How far now?" inquired Rhodon, rubbing the back of his neck anxiously under his thick metal carapace. Almost as though she had overheard, Mebrithiel's voice came loud and clear over the passenger compartment's intercom speakers.

"We've just entered Tannakan system. Professor, what are the in-sys coordinates of that hive?"

And then, there it was. In an instant, all their mustered bravado dissolved into abject fear – all but the professor, who gazed upon the spindly horror with ill-concealed anticipation. For all intents and purposes the sprawling megalith appeared to them like a living, breathing graveyard of shattered starships. The stern of an Armageddon jutted at an odd angle from the cannibalized superstructure of a Jovian Eidolon, and they could easily discern elements of Gallente, Caldari and Amarr warships twisted and bent to the drones' insane whims. There was even a strange ship none of them could identify, unmistakably human in design aesthetic but impossible to attribute to any of the five known races. Between the grim tangles of structures writhed a river of movement; a veritable stampede comprised of a thousand different creatures wrought not of meat and bone but plasteel and synthetics. Here and there, shambling about the exterior of the drifting hive were colossal builder-mechs, detaching and re-welding huge segments of the hive's outer skin, following a construction plan so utterly demented it defied all reason.

"I think I've detected a functional airlock on the aft dorsal of that Armageddon," Mebrithiel chimed over the intercom. "Now, how about that payment, professor?"

Salah-Udin Bohat fumbled with his palm link, clumsily extracting it from a pouch on his exploration suit's belt with a thickly gloved hand. He completed the transaction and wired Ju'wien her funds. "Everyone, please check and double-check your suit integrity, put on your helmets and make sure your re-breathers are charged!"

The Anathema rocked as its airlock port mated with the jutting derelict. "Cool, this airlock still has power, we won't have to force it!" exclaimed Mebrithiel. The covert-ops frigate's inner doors slid open, and the passengers came face to face with a rusted outer door defaced by centuries of micrometeorite impacts. The Armageddon segment of this space hulk must have been ancient, thought Rhodon as he assumed point.

With a jarring sound of metal grinding against metal, the airlock struggled open. Instantly, the passenger compartment was flooded with oily brown smoke and gas. "God damn it," cursed Mebrithiel, "I'll have to sink half my pay into detailing the passenger hold! You nerds have three hours; if you're not here to rendezvous with me at the three hour mark, I'm leaving without you!"

Stupid bastards, she thought.

As the airlock shut behind them, each expedition member clicked a switch on their helmet, casting dual beams of light directly ahead of them. Visibility here was low, but the structure still felt Amarr. It was still an Armageddon class Battleship, not the wretched corruption they expected.

"They're using this proud warship's drive section as a method of propulsion for the entire hive," surmised Aramin. The clang of the airlock disengaging made him swallow nervously – now they were stuck here for three hours.

"An excellent deduction," the professor half-whispered. His attention was drawn by something hidden in the sticky fog that hovered at knee level throughout the derelict ship. "Gotcha!"

His hand struck out into the gloom, prompting Rhea to yelp in fright as it emerged with a fist full of hissing, chittering God only knows what. It had far more legs than any living thing had a right to. Its central memory chip fried by the backpack field generator, the machine-creature thrashed wildly, lashing at the professor's armaglas helmet-visor before going dead in his hand. Fighting with the critter's stiff many-jointed limbs, he forced it into a containment jar helpfully handed to him by Aramin.

"Congratulations, everyone, we have just made history. This is the first strain of this type I have ever seen first-hand. Let us delve deeper into the hive; when we're done here, each and every one of you will be able to write a scientific paper about the specimens you bring back! Stick close to me, everyone, where the field generator can protect you!"

Having beheld that many-legged horror first hand, the formerly fearless Rhodon Tash-Murkon strategically elected to allow his two Kameiras to march ahead of him, their weapons shouldered and their tactical helmet displays probing the murk for signs of movement. 'Signs of movement' was rapidly becoming an understatement as they made their way deeper into the hive – now, they were hard pressed to spot signs of stillness. The walls crawled with loathsome snapping things that spoke to one another in insect-like clicks and whirrs. Their burning red lens-eyes pierced the choking darkness. Tiny things that couldn't get out of the way crunched underfoot, and with revulsion the expedition discovered they now stood upon a seething carpet of mecha-fauna ranging from the size of a thumbnail to that of large rats. They soon encountered their first stomach-turning obstacle – the wall to the left of them had been turned into something akin to a switchboard, with hundreds of plugs and cavities; the wall on the right, a mass of gleaming serpentine tentacles from which individual tendrils shot forth to penetrate a plug on the opposing wall, then withdraw from it as quickly as it had struck.

"His Word protect us .. what are those things?" Rhodon queried, prodding a glowing tendril with a cautious finger and recoiling away in disgust as it delicately wrapped itself around his armoured fingertip, perhaps confusing it for another tentacle.

"Astounding," replied the professor, lost in wonder. "I had seen these on external scans of hives before, but had no clear idea what their purpose was. These are fibre-optic neuromimetic transmitters, and those plugs over there are photoreceptors. You are looking at a part of this hive's brain, good sir – consider these neurons.

"We should take samples of these tendrils, their dexterity is fascinating."

The Kameiras did not need encouragement – instantly, they un-slung their wicked blades and hacked at the horizontal forest of twisting metal worms. They had managed to sever only three before the hallway filled with a terrific shriek, and the rest of the tentacles retracted into their wall.

"The hell was that?" shouted Aramin, whipping around to face the source of the scream.

"Probably a by-product of the hive's factories. Nothing to worry about, I assure you."

The expedition pressed inward, stopping to capture samples. Slowly, the rectangular hallways of man-made ships gave way to utter mechanical madness as they ventured closer to the hive's core. At times they found themselves climbing steel termite mounds, disabled drones pouring

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from every nook and cranny as the professor's magnetic field washed over them. They forded rivers of pitch-black oil, thick with gleaming articulated robotic fish so deep they feared being swallowed. Pebbles of metal and microchip hung suspended in mid-air, jiggling and turning eerily.

"Anyone feel that? This place is… wrong, somehow…"

They turned to the student making the ghastly assertion only to see him vomiting violently inside his helmet. He squatted and, apparently feeling better, made as if to remove the helmet.

"Stop, you fool! Take off that helmet and you die in an instant! You can clean up when we get out of here!" bellowed the professor. He stormed over to the kneeling man to secure his helmet, and Aramin followed, only to become overwhelmed with nausea himself.

"Lean down, it's better that way. I believe there is something odd with the gravity here."

Indeed, as they glanced about, their eyes came to rest on the sludge-river's bank, where droplets of filthy oil built up and viscously perspired upward from the floor into the ceiling, defying the laws of physics and sense. As they glanced up, their helmet beams illuminating that ceiling, they gasped in amazement – another river of liquid ran there as well.

Vomit sloshing around inside his helmet, the ill student broke down in tears. "I cannot stand this place any longer! It's maddening!" The core of the hive was a horror, an Escher-esque nightmare; a blasted place rife with non-Euclidean geometries where all that was right went wrong. Another student, testing a personal hypothesis, placed his boot against a nearly vertical wall, then against all rhyme or reason placed his other boot against that same wall, walking straight up at an angle perpendicular to his stunned expedition-mates.

"The hive's artificial gravity appears to be confined to about two or three feet from any flat surface," the professor announced, following the student's improbable vertical stroll. "Squatting or crawling should reduce the vertigo you are experiencing from the differentiated gravity fields."

"One cannot help but wonder why the hive has gravity in the first place," Aramin questioned rhetorically. "They are, after all, space-borne beasts."

Their containment jars were now filled with hideous things ranging from copper-skinned tapeworms to convoluted hydrocephalic spiders with hundreds of independent eyes. Crawling along what their guts told them was the floor, the explorers stumbled into a dead end; here, the chamber terminated against a thrumming edifice of cables and glowing furnace-like outlets.

"This must be one of the hive's reactors. Look, it is also Amarr in construction. It seems this automaton filth has bastardized our technology to suit their needs."

"Where do we go from here? Should we turn around?" probed Rhea.

The professor looked around. Then he looked up. As everyone followed his gaze, they saw that the chamber did not in fact terminate, but lead to another, the end of which they could not see. Unfortunately, the access to that chamber lay on the ceiling.

"Well, we *can* walk on walls, can't we?"

They clambered up the wall, grabbing on to bundles of snake-like things that purred and rattled blasphemously when touched, the dizzying ascent wreaking havoc with their inner ears. Once inside, they found themselves in the largest open chamber they had glimpsed since the Cathedral of Salvation's great golden hall back in Dam-Torsad. A million lights, a million eyes peered back at them from the fog-bound darkness.

"We should go back now, professor."

The professor said nothing, seemingly captivated by the endless dark. His eyes seemed to focus on a pair of green lights in that black morass, a pair of eyes that gazed back toward the procession of explorers.

"Professor! We have one and a half hours left until rendezvous, we should start heading back."

"Professor?"

Still, Salah-Udin Bohat gave no reply. Slowly, hauntingly, he walked past Rhodon and the Kameiras, toward the two green lights. His face was so utterly devoid of expression, noted the Tash-Murkon noble, that he might as well have been a corpse.

As the expedition watched him with confusion and uncertainty, the old professor raised his hand, as if waving to the two green lights. He then lowered it, and brought his other hand to his forearm control pad.

"Good evening, grandfather," he said into the darkness, thumbing a switch on the control pad. Immediately, the Kameiras' cruel steel blades, a moment ago held taut by the professor's magnetic field generator, fell to hang down loosely at their sides.

In that instant, the entire chamber was filled with the clickety clack of a million animated limbs, and the horrified expedition found themselves swarmed. As waves of screaming, shrieking machines crashed into them, scuttling up their legs, penetrating every chink and crevice of their suits and armour, they thrashed and writhed as though on fire. Already the things had managed to get into Aramin's helmet and he let out an un-earthly howl as they crawled into his nose, ears, and beneath his eyelids. There was no blood, no gore, merely a torturous infestation of the human body that could not be fought off, could not be stopped. Howling in rage the Kameiras opened fire wildly into the darkness; here and there a set of mechanical eyes winked out as their careless shells connected with the living walls now contracting and crushing down upon them from every side.

"*Welcome home, grandson,*" the thing with green eyes intoned, its voice not loud but somehow filling and permeating every corner of the monstrous hive. Somehow, they heard it not with their ears, but their minds. Emerging from the shadows, it greeted the panicked expedition with a sight unlike any other even as tiny machines agonizingly invaded their lungs and arteries – its casing was forged of no man-made material, but some form of strangely shifting composite that went opaque one moment, then translucent the next, revealing machinery beneath whose complexity and advancement was leaps ahead of anything man-made. Even its eyes were not the shuttered lenses of drones, but expressive, emotive glowering orbs that seemed to radiate glee and hate. From below the casing hung a series of gleaming articulated limbs, some terminating in cruel pincers and needles, and two inexplicably equipped with something very much resembling human hands.

As the sea of whirring metallic insects reached his neck-level, some already fighting their way into his nostrils, Rhodon Tash-Murkon's fading eyes came to rest on a bit of text adorning the side of the hyper-advanced drone's central processor casing. Just before his expression went cadaver-still like the professor's and he too was consumed by the throbbing mass, the strange word registered in his rapidly corrupting and disintegrating mind.

"O R P H Y X"

+++

Aromatic incense filled the great golden assembly hall in Dam-Torsad, clouds of it forming into a fog that hung at knee-level as an assembly of nobles, planetary governors and Naval officers gathered for their monthly talks. Here, the smooth operation of the Empire's lesser affairs was decided; those affairs deemed too minor to warrant the Privy Council's attention. For hours they spoke of planetary tithes, the season's agricultural world crop yields and security matters in their respective sectors, occasionally erupting into squabbles that the assembly chair quickly stamped out. Disorder in the halls of Amarr was, after all, intolerable.

A tall man in a flowing red and crimson robe stood, staring expectantly at the chair.

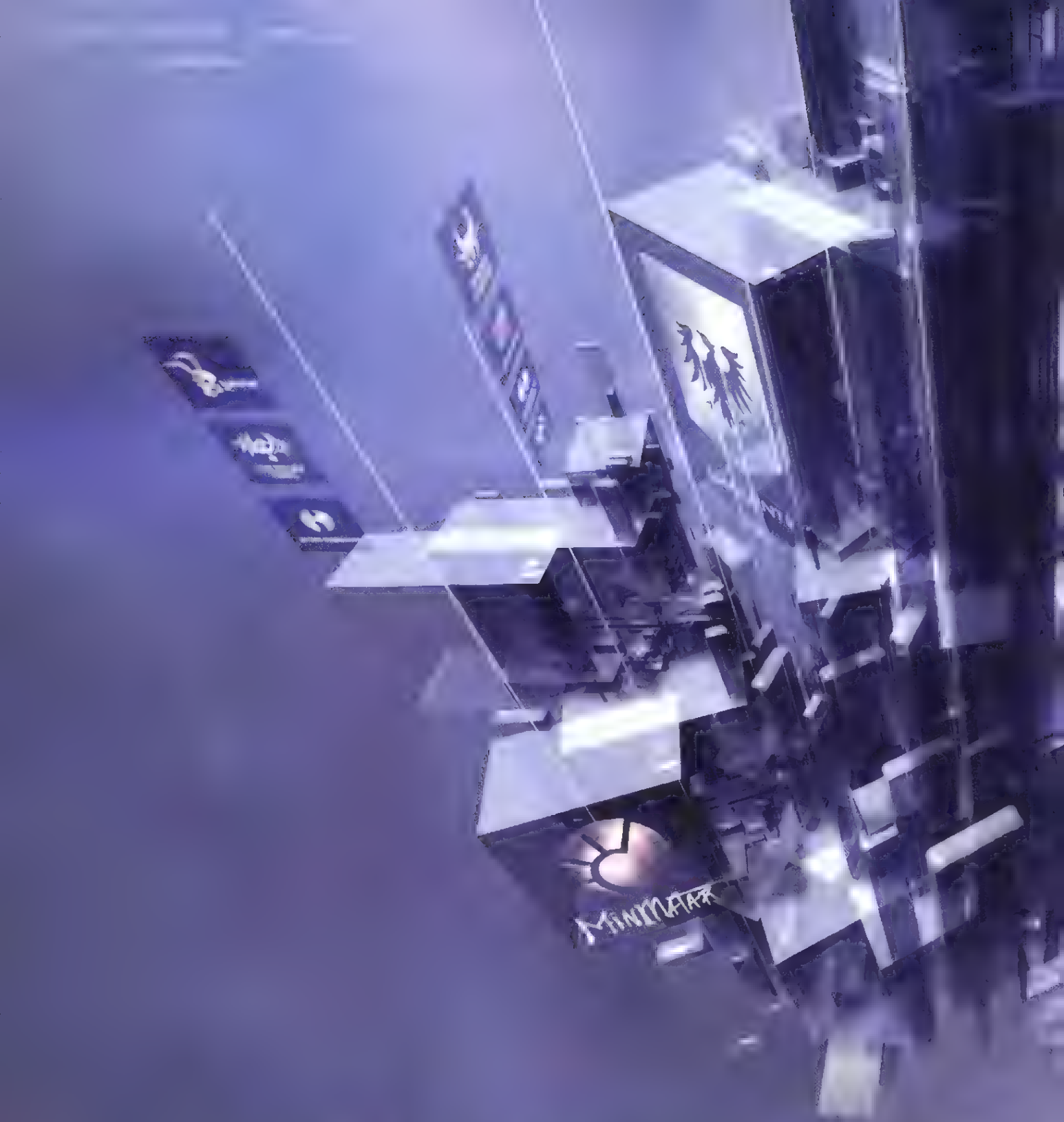
"We recognize esteemed noble of house Tash-Murkon, Rhodon Tash-Murkon. The floor is yours."

Rhodon Tash-Murkon smiled disarmingly, his hands open. "Honoured assembly, I come to you with a request. The Tash-Murkon family has *always* eagerly contributed tithes of conscripts and warships for the Navy. However, as of late, I have come to believe that those tithes are being squandered on patrols of low strategic value, low-security sectors, instead of bolstering the security of our homeland. In light of the major events that have transpired in recent months, such as the purging of Blood Raider filth from the Bleak Lands and, God carry his soul, the Emperor's assassination, I come before you to ask for an agreement to scale back Amarr Navy presence in the Bleak Lands, perhaps starting with a staged withdrawal from the Tandoiras constellation. I feel that loyalist paramilitaries such as the CVA can handle the region's security needs adequately."

"After all," he explained, "there's nothing left there save for a few *harmless* rogue drones…"

And far away, in a black place so far between the stars that men have not thought to trespass, something smiled.

Tom Czerniawski lives in Toronto, Canada, and has been with EVE since well before the alpha test stage. He has authored the now-concluded Hamish Saga, *and invites readers to keep their eyes peeled for the upcoming* Chorus of Angels Saga.



WAR IS COMING TO EVE AND EVERYONE'S INVITED

THE EMPIRES STRIKE BACK

CALDARI
AMARR

part of the mooted 'contracts' system – a system that will combine [illegible] interface. In many ways, Contracts and FW [illegible] engage in factional conflict you have [illegible] agreement with one side or another, [illegible] very much a holistic reworking of the whole [illegible] Whether through trade, bounty hunting, [illegible] combat, FW is entwined with the very EVEn[illegible] where the rich background and history of EVE w[illegible] for example, rather than just restrict the trade o[illegible]

PRIME FRICTION

[illegible] Ushra'Khan and the Curatores Veritatis Alliance p[illegible] this, where even without official [illegible] fight for, members are happy to [illegible] nationalities. For CCP, Factional [illegible] factions, inviting others who were [illegible] and rewarding those who honour their [illegible] among the empires and corporations [illegible]

"We're using the term 'factional warfare' [illegible] are going to be able to join one of the existing [illegible] Ward, CCP's designer in charge of guiding this [illegible] Edition patch kicked off the tension between the [illegible] to take on missions as mercenaries – in which case the [illegible] of a long-term campaign.

[illegible] one uber item to one player, but perhaps a flagship to an entire corp. It's [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Even the most infrequent visitor to the EVE Online website can't have failed to notice the lack of Chronicles that have been posted of late. Where they once appeared weekly, now months [illegible] pass before a new story is posted. In part, E-ON is to blame, since our Chronicles require original art and story checking from CCP's people, but we're assured that recent re-organisation means that not only will new background fiction be forthcoming, but that storylines will gather pace and events will be integrated more into the game as Kali draws near.

"The events team has recently been given more leeway with what it can do with the story arcs, and Gnauton has recently been freed up from his stint as a static content creator so he can focus on organizing events and news," explains Noah Ward. "Our hopes are that these two aspects will combine to [illegible] ensure that role-play and Factional Warfare really link up and make sense.

"[illegible] primary factors we have to take into consideration, for example, is how existing role-player organizations [illegible] scheme of things," adds Gauti. "We have loyalist player alliances dedicated to the four empires, as well as [illegible] and alliances that lend their support to the smaller factions and work towards their goals in-game. Making [illegible] guys to find a place in the fray, while maintaining the individuality and character of the organizations [illegible] going to be a main focus point for us."

"[illegible] ady got a lot of great RP going on, like with Ushra'Khan and CVA, and we want to embrace that," [illegible] "The goal with EVE has always been to give players the tools and to see what they do with the [illegible] e of those tools."

order to kill a few spare minutes online.

Factional Warfare," says Noah. "These guys are the ones who might not have that much time to focus on

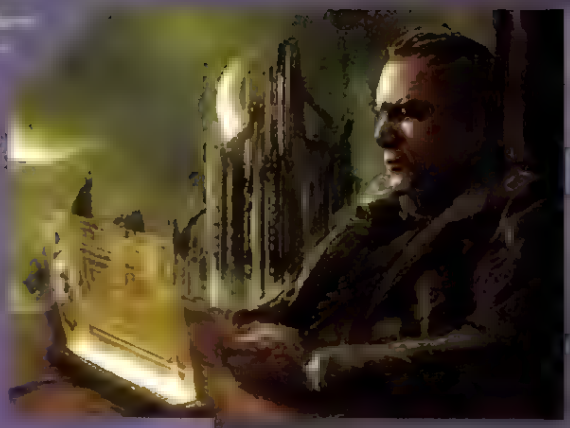
common goal in a larger group against evenly matched

attracted to MMOGs because of the other humans they know will be out there, even if they don't want to

to their agent and getting yet another damsel in

people pondering Factional

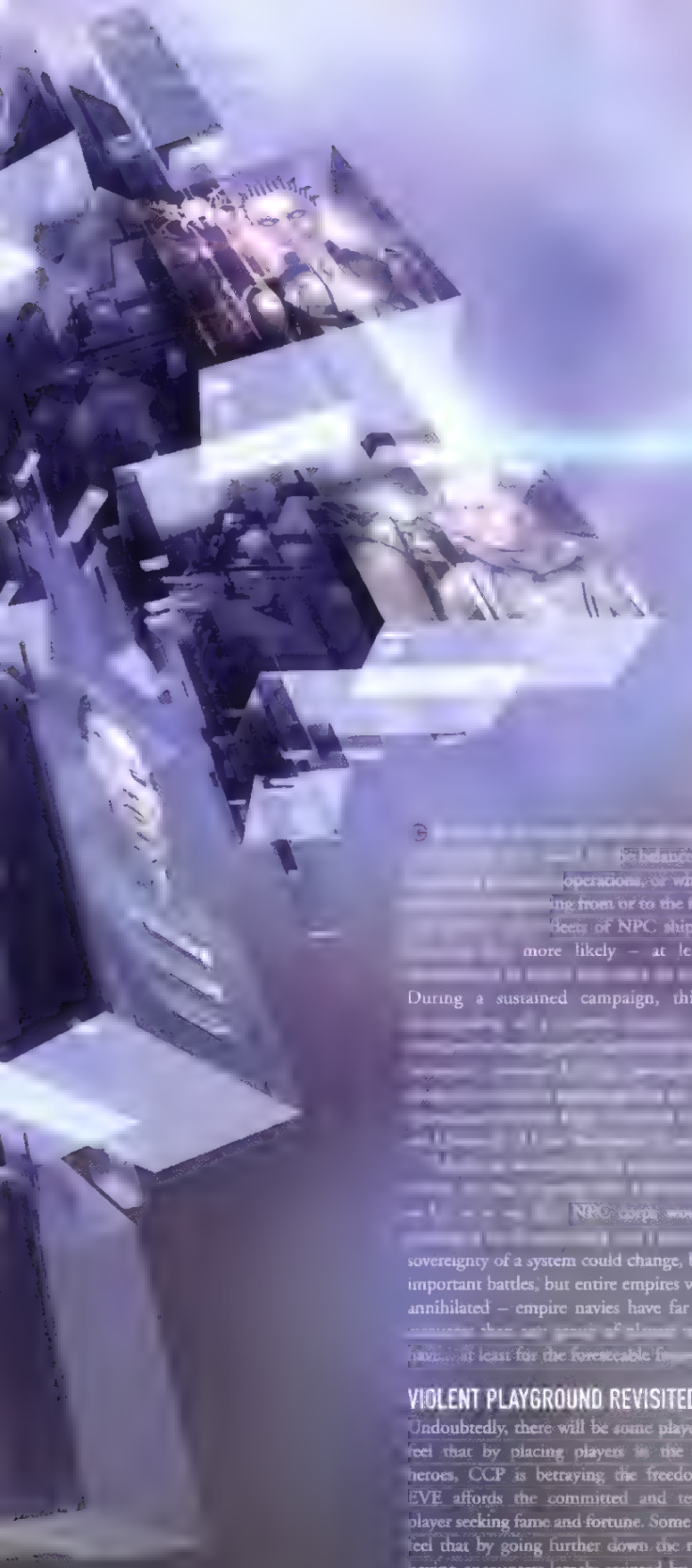
TOM SIGA



OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

an eye on events as they within empire borders. To access to restricted systems strategic advantage that levied against enemy alliances and there will, of course, be rewards for those that pledge to work alongside a nation-state. However, let us not forget that FW will also encompass the goals of pirate NPC corps, so it may end up that many alliances would rather fight against the empires, which is likely to cause all sorts of scenarios to rise up.

"The players that become legends are the ones who make a name for themselves on a grand scale, and the 0.0-based players are the ones who are really doing the stuff that I think EVE was made for," ponders Noah. "Imagine running the organization that overthrows the Amarr Empire. Imagine being attacked by that organization. I'd say that's a pretty good reason for 0.0 leaders to care about what's going on in empire space. They need to keep their finger on the pulse of the whole EVE galaxy if they want to keep their edge."



EMPIRE BUILDING

At the Fanfest, CCP announced its intention to take player organisations up to the next level, with the functionality for alliance leaders to forge player-run empires that could eventually compete with the likes of Amarr. In the long term this remains a goal, but it's unlikely that such functionality will make its way into Kali.

"We need to take baby steps. Small changes like the addition of level-4 missions can have huge effects on how players interact," reveals Noah. "If suddenly everyone gets it in their heads that they want to take over empire space, they could totally abandon 0.0 space in an attempt to take on these huge empires. So we'll start with the goal-oriented combat and work our way up to players taking over the galaxy..."

[illegible] battles in progress where [illegible] balance that influences where supplies will [illegible] operations, or where high-ranking NPC characters [illegible] ing from or to the frontline. A battle in progress may [illegible] fleets of NPC ships going at each other across the [illegible] more likely – at least initially – an extenuating [illegible]

During a sustained campaign, this could mean the temporary [illegible]

[illegible] e rewards – you only have to read [illegible] e potential.

[illegible] the players affect the outcome of [illegible] way," says Noah. "I wouldn't go [illegible] NPC corps would switch sides, but anything is [illegible]

sovereignty of a system could change, based on the outcome of the most important battles, but entire empires won't be annihilated – empire navies have far greater [illegible] than any group of players will [illegible] have, at least for the foreseeable fu[illegible]

THE SPOILS OF WAR

Rare items, cold hard cash and faction standing are just some of the more obvious rewards of working for an NPC organization, and this is an aspect of EVE that will be expanded for Kali. NPC factions will bestow medals, commendations and other trinkets that, while not improving your ship or abilities, will certainly confer bragging rights. The formalised ranks and ratings system is an aspect sure to please fans of the old *Elite* games.

VIOLENT PLAYGROUND REVISITED

Undoubtedly, there will be some players who feel that by placing players in the role of heroes, CCP is betraying the freedom that EVE affords the committed and tenacious player seeking fame and fortune. Some already feel that by going further down the route of having encounters largely scripted by outside forces (devs), CCP is traveling perilously close to the path furrowed by *World of WarCraft*. CCP is well aware of such fears and insists the grand vision of EVE remains intact, that of giving players the ultimate freedom to shape the fortunes of the galaxy.

"In the simplest terms, the aim of FW is to give players [illegible] [illegible] it's always nice to have more targets.

[illegible] that's really where we're trying to go with this.

[illegible]

WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE BROADER LEVELS OF CAMARADERIE *AND* ANTAGONISM

THE NEW EYE ON EVE

EVENEWS.COM

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If you answered 'Yes' to all of the questions above then you have what it takes to apply for a position. **SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOLDIER?**

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PULGOR

	Pulgor
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	CEO/Founder
	None
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	3.5
	"Stop whining and get mining!"
	"You know, I think those Freedom Fighters are right."

The Ammatar. The very moniker conjures thoughts ranging from 'race traitors and sheep' to 'peacemakers and visionaries'. The tiny semi-autonomous state, which lies on the tumultuous lunatic fringe dividing the Amarr and Minmatar nations, is populated chiefly by those Minmatar who took side with the golden Empire during the great rebellion of a century past. Scorned by the free people of the Republic, embraced warmly as prodigal sons by the great Amarr theocracy, they cling tenaciously to the mineral-rich sectors that form their domain. Whether due to limited scientific and industrial resources or regular conscription to bolster the small but tenacious Ammatar Fleet, the Ammatar lay claim to few freelance capsule pilots; among those few, captain Pulgor Edallan stands prominent as a representative of his home state.

THE TALENTED MR. EDALLAN

His resume reads like a sprawling database of experience. It speaks of legitimate professions – trainer, trader, miner, manufacturer, and free-spacer – then deviates into fields hinting at martial prowess. Outer ring alliance member, soldier – "Even, for a very very brief time," Pulgor confesses, "a pirate." In all his myriad guises, a common thread: "I strive to promote Ammatar interests and to bring my governor's message to all kinds of different people. It's been a very interesting ride so far." The only trades missing from the tally are outpost administration and alliance command, though, as Mr. Edallan sheepishly admits, he doubts himself the type to carry that much responsibility

BLOOD AND GLORY

Our meeting takes place aboard the I-Con Executor, a Tempest-class refurbished heavily with Imperial trappings, seemingly to occlude the haphazard Republic design method beneath. Fine Amarrian and Ammatar artworks and religious symbols lend themselves to a convincing façade – in places, it feels no different from a ship of the golden fleet. No amount of gilding can mask the fact that this vessel has seen some serious action.

The Executor, in proud service of the Emperor

"There are a few wars in her past, yes," attests Pulgor, grimly. "The biggest war I've been in is the Blood War as it is now called. The Aegis Militia had set out to clean the Bleak Lands… then the blood raider supporters, called 'Blooders', formed a united front to attempt to stop us. The war culminated in the Amarr Navy intervening and reclaiming the entire region." He adds, "a glorious day for everyone that served in that conflict."

HARD-WON LIFE

It seems then, that Mr. Edallan is all too willing to shed blood for the cause. How does he react to the label of 'race traitor' all too eagerly cast upon him by Republic loyalists? What made him so fervently devoted to an empire accused of ongoing oppression by his kinsmen?

"Well, when I graduated from capsuleer school, I was intent on getting on with my life, not getting pulled into a war that ended centuries ago. However, it seems my former brethren had other ideas. I never wanted any part of the numerous terrorist actions attributed to the Ushra'Khan, nor anything to do with the two-faced Republic's diplomatic policies. Therefore I went to the Ammatar State. I don't see any purpose in the Ushra'Khan's activities and I'll have no part in them or their Republic backers. I used to get quite a bit of criticism from Ushra'Khan loyalists; the Republic Loyalists, for some odd reason, don't seem to care. I have fought against the Ushra'Khan a few times. Nowadays I find it is the Gallente that most frequently lash out at my kind."

I don't see any purpose in the Ushra'Khan's activities and I'll have no part in them or their Republic backers

BORN FREE

Yet hope is not forgotten – even though nothing short of large-scale war could bring eventual reconciliation and a union between Pator and San Matar, Pulgor remains faithful that it is within the Empire's scope to finally defeat all terrorist factions standing in the way of peace. "The only way to ensure such a union would be to dismantle these organizations and proceed with some productive negotiations. I doubt that the Republic would ever be willing or able to do that as the mindset of their populace is one of revenge for a war that ended quite some time ago."

Pulgor will readily sing praise of the arrangement between the aristocrats of Ammatar and their Imperial overlords. "Look around, there are no Amarrian overseers here, no shackles, no limitations. I'm as free as any citizen of any civilization can be. I have my own life to do with as I please and I have the joy of serving the true ruler of Matar, the Ammatar Governor. Some would confuse the lifestyle of the free Ammatar people as some kind of slavery. To them I would ask a simple question: How are their lives any different?"

HIT THE DECKS

IMAGINE AN EVE THAT REQUIRES NO SUBSCRIPTION, NO INTERNET CONNECTION AND NO PC... IT EXISTS, ALMOST. MIKE NUDD TAKES YOU THROUGH EVE'S 'IN UTERO' OFFLINE OFFSPRING, *THE SECOND GENESIS* CCG

As an EVE Online player you may have at one time or another been the victim of server crashes, software bugs, connection lag, or abuse of the interface by third parties (e.g. macro-miners). EVE, like all MMORPGs, is often at the mercy of the computerised media on which is depends. Thankfully, EVE in particular is ably supported by a technical team who work 24/7 to keep your experience as enjoyable as possible. The work behind the scenes is tough, however, and there are always more problems around the corner.

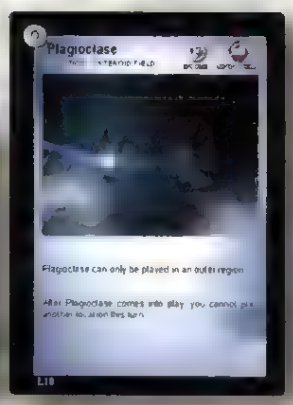
It would be reasonable to ask why CCP would choose to document their EVE world using such a temperamental and demanding medium, instead of focusing their efforts on other, easier formats and approaches, such as novels, or board games. The truth is that EVE is already making itself known under different guises – one format is the magazine that you hold in your hands right now. Another version of EVE, now under development, is coming to life as a collectible card game (CCG) called *EVE: The Second Genesis*. When it sees official release it will join the growing ranks of strategy card games that have sprung up since the release back in 1993 of the 'granddaddy' of all CCGs – *Magic: The Gathering* (*M:TG*).

When I heard that there was an opportunity to test the *Second Genesis* game now under development I jumped at the chance. I've been playing games of all kinds since I was very small, and I developed a keen interest in role-playing games (RPGs) and card games (including CCGs) – in fact pretty much most types of games – as a teenager. Moreover, I have loved tinkering and experimenting with games since I first got into the hobby. I can easily talk the hind legs off a donkey over the approaches to role-playing, narrative, strategy and storytelling. Rather than live with the shortcomings of a particular game or genre, I would come up with 'house rules' or find other ways to put things right. I wouldn't consider myself a stereotypical gamer and I've never devoted myself exclusively to any one particular type or style of game. By keeping an open mind and a strong enthusiasm to try anything (including going to every gaming event or convention possible) it allows me to take a much broader and yet more discerning view of the hobby overall. One week I might be sitting around a table with friends and some dice, the next I'm pushing miniatures around a wargames table. Or I could be playing Chess, *V:TES*, *Rome: Total War* or now, perhaps, *EVE: The Second Genesis* CCG.

I was introduced to the EVE CCG through a friend and fellow CCG gamer who just happened to know CCP in Iceland. We've only had the Beta cards in our hands for a couple of months, but we've been meeting at least once a week to try it out. I was

What about EVE Online?

For those that have not previously heard of this card game's development, it might be fair to question whether CCP can spare the resources to develop another, different game based on the same EVE universe? Surely any time spent on such endeavours just detracts from the time spent on improving and fixing the online game? In actual fact, CCP has already spent a lot of time on *The Second Genesis* without anyone in EVE Online noticing. The CCG uses art panels taken from the online game, and it requires no programming effort or real-time maintenance. Individual games of *Second Genesis* can be completed within 20-30 mins, so playtesting has actually impinged very little on CCP's regular routine.



▲ SHIP IN OUTER REGION

As the only ship in the region, its presence allows its controller to also control the entire outer region. If an opponent were to warp any ships here then there would be a battle unless the player controlling the Mauler elects to withdraw, instead seceding control of Serpentis Prime to that opponent.

▲ OUTER REGION

The player controlling an Outer Region may claim the abilities and the ISK income of not just the Region card, but of all (if any) attached location cards.

▲ LOCATION IN OUTER REGION

Many locations can only be played on Outer Regions. Any ships placed on the mining command at a location which has a mining yield greater then zero may claim additional ISK income equal to the command level x mining yield level.

▼ NEWS

Instant effect cards, many of which can be played to react to an opponent's turn. Some are immediately discarded after use, while others remain in play for a specified amount of time.

◀ SHIP IN HOME REGION

Any ships placed undocked in the Home Region may defend the Starbase from attack.

▼ STARBASE

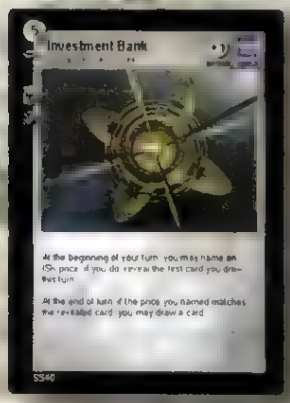
This is your 'home' card. If it is destroyed then you lose the game. All Starbases start with basic abilities, but you may upgrade them (flip them over) during the course of the game to gain additional abilities.

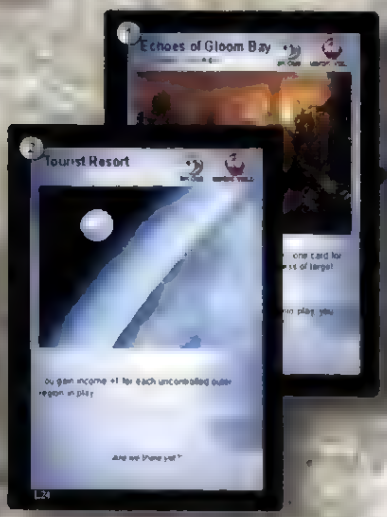
▼ STARBASE STRUCTURES

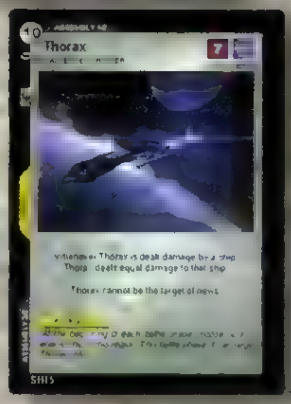
Structures are primarily used to increase the shield rating of your Starbase, but many can also provide additional ISK income or other game abilities.

▶ MARKET DECK

The shuffled deck of cards from which you draw to play the game.







▲ SHIP ASSEMBLY

When you play a ship from your hand it must first be assembled, and it is rotated on your Starbase each turn until the assembly is completed, at which point it may then be placed either docked or undocked.

▲ LOCATIONS/ HOME REGION

Locations are the primary source of ISK income. You can place an unlimited number of locations in your home region.

▲ SCRAPHEAP

All cards that leave play or are discarded are placed face up on your scrapheap.

▲ SHIP IN DOCK

Any ships placed docked behind your Home Region are protected from attack.

◀ UNPLAYED OUTER REGIONS

Every deck should include three outer regions, which you may keep hidden until the moment you choose to play them.

To enjoy the full EVE CCG experience, a set of poker chips will come in handy. No doubt CCP will be creating a set specifically for the game

CCG, TCG... WTF CCP?

A collectible card game (CCG) or trading card game (TCG) differs from a normal card game in that you don't play with a fixed set of cards out of the box, and you don't necessarily play with the same cards as your opponents. The game is made up of hundreds (or even thousands) of cards of varying rarities which you will find randomized in every 'booster pack' you buy. You put together your own unique collection of cards from your basic decks, boosters, from trading with friends or by seeking out single cards in shops or online at places like eBay. You draw from your personal card collection to build your decks, and you use the decks that you have created to play the game.

Most CCGs are fairly strategic and require you to play to a specific goal – e.g. reduce your opponent's life to zero, kill their creatures, destroy their ships, complete missions, collect treasure etc. You will probably need to arm yourself with weapons or spells or monsters or vehicles (or some combination thereof), and it is likely that it will involve some kind of variable and expendable resource such as life, mana, money, status (or some other commodity). Different CCGs will have different goals, but they will all involve a level of resource management and planning. In addition, most CCGs have a strong random element – normally you will shuffle your cards and draw off the top of your deck as the game progresses. You will likely have a 'hand' of accessible cards as well as the cards you might have in play and the remainder that are as yet unclaimed from your deck.

Most CCGs are turn-based, with each player taking their turn in succession, performing a number of steps or procedures each time in an effort to reach their goal. Many CCGs also share similar mechanics – the most common of which is the effect whereby you 'tap' (or 'tilt', 'drain', 'boot' etc.) a card sideways to reflect that it has been utilized. Many games also divide the table into distinct areas of play that have different purposes, and they may even use different types of card in support of these concepts. Some games require the use of counters, beads, dice or coins to aid their resource management processes.

When playing a CCG you will find that a number of skills are brought to bear. Firstly you need to obtain the cards required to build your deck. Secondly, you need to determine what cards you should put in your deck, and how many of each (most games allow multiples, and some have no upper limits). Thirdly, you need to work out how to play your deck to best effect against all manner of opponents. And fourthly, in many games you also need to know how to read or even influence your opponents to best effect – the game is not always just about the cards themselves.

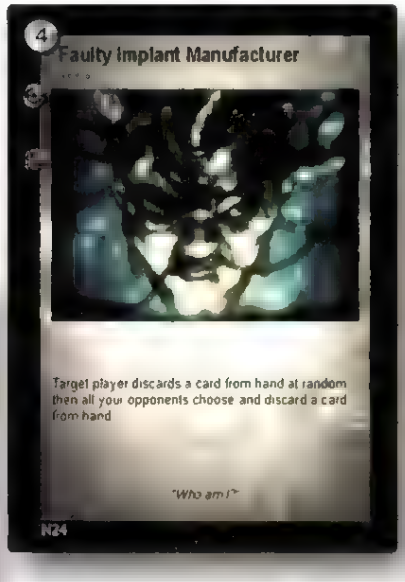
particularly impressed with how great the cards looked when I first got them – in my previous experiences with other games the aesthetics and art design took place long after the testing and development phase. It's been great to play with what looks and feels like the real thing.

I was interested to see that the guys behind the design of the EVE CCG (and EVE Online generally) were CCG players, and in particular veterans of the *M:TG* circuit. It is commonly held that MMORPGs such as EVE Online focus more on the strategy and the mechanical elements of role-playing, but this prior game experience would certainly put them in good stead. In fact, my first impressions about *EVE: The Second Genesis* were that it played very much like the *Magic* CCG, in that the majority of the skill seemed to lie in building the deck, and that success in the game would come mainly from a good selection – or 'flow' – of cards as they are drawn from the top of the deck.

What I found particularly innovative with *Second Genesis* is that the game completely abandons the traditional 'tap' mentality of most CCGs – in the game you never turn your cards to reflect their usage each go. Instead, there are quite novel mechanics relating to ship assembly and ship orders – in the former case the card is twisted to reflect each turn of construction (the larger the ship, the more turns required) and in the latter case the ship is twisted a different direction depending on what you want it to do.

Each player in the game has a starbase card selected from one of the four main empires in EVE which is kept quite separate from the main deck of cards (known as the 'market'). This starbase is your base of operations and must be protected at all costs – to win you must destroy the starbase of each of your opponents. Your starbase has a default shield rating and, as you play starbase structures (or other cards), this rating may increase. As the game progresses you may use your starbase to build ships, each of which will have their own attack and shield ratings. In battle, ships deal their attack as damage, and if a ship receives damage of an amount equal to or greater than its shield rating then it is destroyed. Following the same principle, if an undefended starbase were to take damage equal to or greater than its shield rating then it is destroyed and the player that controls it loses the game.

Structures and ships cost ISK; each player



The EVE CCG is nearly half-way through the beta testing stage. Cards are updated on a weekly basis with new art and updated stats, meaning these here could be very different to those in the final game

must lay out locations, trade and perform mining operations to increase their wealth so that they may go on to play their other cards There are also news cards which bring other fast effects and random events into the game

During the course of a single turn a player would total his or her income, and add the ISK gained to any held over from previous turns. If the player has ships being assembled, he or she advances them a turn or, if any of them are completed they may be brought into play. Then the player may (in any order) play new cards from their hand (paying for any associated costs with their ISK counters), upgrade their starbase, move their ships to different regions, or place their ships on commands. Once all this has been completed, if any ships have been moved into a region occupied by enemy ships a battle ensues (unless the opposing player chooses to withdraw). After all battles have been resolved, the active player checks the number of cards in their hand and discards, if necessary, down to seven cards

Although there is a wealth of cards available, the strategic options of *Second Genesis* are currently quite narrow and clearly defined It is not possible to play any cards without a sufficient supply of ISK, and it is not possible to defend your starbase or attack anyone else's without ships. Since this is the only way to win, each player must therefore concentrate almost exclusively on generating income and building fleets. I'm told that new starbases will be released in the base set and these will offer more routes to victory, but even if the game keeps to its current constraints, there is quite a lot of tactical freedom. ISK is mainly generated by the control of locations, but these may be placed in a large number of combinations both in your home region and in any outer regions (playing outer regions is not compulsory, but often helpful). Additional ISK can also be generated by placing mining ships on command at locations with a mining yield, by moving trading ships to outer regions, or by playing a selection of special news cards. The only real strategic choice is about speed. You can choose to concentrate on a very quick start with small ships that will lead you to an early strike before your opponent has had a chance to build up. Alternatively, you can opt to play a slower, more defensive early game until you have built up enough ISK to play some very big and scary ships later on that are difficult for your opponent(s) to destroy.

The game is quite easy to pick up and my local playtesting group has had very few questions regarding the rules themselves or the interpretation of cards as they are currently presented. The development team behind the game has been encouraging and has responded well to the comments we have provided so far - in fact one major change to the game (in relation to the number of cards drawn) has come about already as a result. There are perhaps some issues to address in regards to the way battles play out, and to the available reactive abilities of defending players, but then this is what the playtesting process is all about. We are confident that in the end *The Second Genesis* will be a strong and interesting CCG well worth playing.

Assuming the game sees a retail release in the not-too-distant future, it is difficult to predict how it might fare, but I would hope it would do well. Clearly it will appeal to fans of online EVE, and also to gamers that may perhaps not have that much experience with CCGs The *Hecatomb* CCG (a rival 'alternative' game recently introduced to the market by Wizards of the Coast) has drawn a surprising number of players, most of which are of the sort that wouldn't give *Magic* or *Pokemon* or *Vs.* the time of day – this goes to show that there is certainly an audience out there for intelligent, mature and challenging CCGs

Player support is really the key issue – organising events around the world and giving players the opportunity to meet, play and trade is what breathes life into a CCG. I am aware of several other professional, license-based card games that have fared poorly just because people couldn't find enough other players in their area. CCP has an advantage in that the world of EVE is already an exciting, living place with a large and loyal fan base Running parallel stories that intertwine between the online game and the card game will certainly help give Second Genesis some longevity. Releasing expansion sets of cards to complement the base set is, after all, really the only way to keep player interest and to keep the play environment evolving in the long-term, and this in turn raises new possibilities Further down the line we could see the introduction of new starbases, new ships, new locations or even new types of card. Just like in the online EVE universe, almost anything could be around the next corner just waiting to be discovered.

As well as being a rabid player of games of all sizes, genres and formats, Mike Nudd is a journalist, fiction writer and game/scenario designer. His credits include writing for* Scrye *magazine, testing* Vampire: the Eternal Struggle *CCG and the* Serenity *RPG based on Joss Whedon's film, and sole design credit for* Vampire: Prince of the City*, a board game due to be released by White Wolf Publishing in early 2006.

CCP HAS AN ADVANTAGE IN THAT THE WORLD OF EVE IS ALREADY AN EXCITING, LIVING PLACE WITH A LARGE AND LOYAL FAN BASE

COUNTING STO

NEW FICTION
BY FRAN MACJUS

You can see the whole stone-yard and most of the farm from the kitchen window. As a child I would spend rainy days counting, my finger against the glass, one.., two... three... four... 16, 17 funeral stones under the raindrops.

Great-great Grandpa's stone – broken, burned and scarred – was the only thing, other than her clothes and her unborn child, Great-great Grandma had brought with her from Caldari Prime. She had left her own stone, along with everything else, behind. As soon as she arrived in Nonni, and using whatever tools she could find, she made herself a new one, half the traditional size, to match what remained of Great-great Grandpa's.

The burnt, broken stone and the crude little one are in the middle, the others surrounding them in a loose circle. I'd count them slowly; first the 11 carved stones where the owner's body and bones had returned to the soil, then the six smooth ones marking the spot where the ground was still waiting.

It's raining now, like those days back then, and although the rain is still the same the stones have changed, they always do.

Grandpa's stone is now inscribed, has been for quite a few years. In old Napanii runes, pre-Raata style, it screams: "Traditionalist to the bones, soil and beyond."

In all my life I have never met a man quite as bitter as Grandpa. Everything he did, said and, I believe, lived for was to provoke his three grandchildren to enroll in the Caldari Navy. Nothing Jakki, Aikka or I ever did was good enough for him unless it took us one step closer to space.

As little children, he would gather the three of us around Great-great Grandpa's grave and tell us the tale of the Gallente Dragon burning home. Whether Grandpa's bitterness helped or hindered, he was still a terrific storyteller. Aikka always wept when the dragon darkened sun and sky with his black wings, and Jakki and I would have to hold little sister otherwise she would have nightmares later. Even today, if I close my eyes and remember Grandpa's voice I can see and smell the smoke from the burning cities, and hear the cries of agony.

Pointing at the burned stone, he would stare at us and finish the tale by saying: "See this grave? Empty. His bones were left behind in Caldari Prime, screaming in pain and rage under the burned soil, yelling at the Gallente soles over them *every single day*...

"Begging for us to *return*."

Father always nodded meekly to whatever Grandpa said. Tall even for a Deteis, Grandpa's disdain for his "worthless excuse for a son" was always an oppressive, almost physical entity around the farm. Father had been rejected for space duty; after brief service in a land unit in some backwater moon, he returned home to work the rest of his life on the farm. Grandpa, Medal of Honor pilot as his own brother and father before him, never forgave his son this failure to State and family.

He made Father salute him whenever they crossed, inside the house or out. I asked him once why Jakki, Aikka nor I ever had to. "Army land worms must salute Space Navy officers," he sneered. "Such are the State regulations. Sub-adults like you are free of such discipline... for now..."

When Jakki got accepted into the State War Academy, Grandpa couldn't stop laughing and smiling for a week, hugging brother all the time with tears of joy. "The Family is back on track!" he would yell every five minutes, "back serving the State. Back fighting for Home!" It was the first time I had seen him laughing wholeheartedly. He died in his sleep nearly a month later, a smile on his face. I guess he felt his duties were fulfiled.

Jakki's stone is inscribed now too. I carved it myself a few years back, with my previous hands. To repay his student's loan, the State rented him as crewmember to some idiot by the name of Korgans. This idiot took his Blackbird on a death ride to some backwater Amarrian system where a bunch of radical extremists were fighting the CVA over some lousy slaves. Brother got killed without ever seeing Gallente space, let alone Caldari Prime. We never got his body, only the news.

I carved his stone that day. It was raining heavily, just like today. I played the old counting game and then smashed the window, cut both my palms and scarred my left cheek. Blood and tears and glass and rain.

At dinner, staring at my bandaged hands, I asked: "Should I fill his place? Should I go up as Grandpa always wanted?" Mother and Aikka looked at me in horror, the tears choking the "no!" in their throats. Father, who usually avoided physical contact, hugged me with all his strength, held me tight and whispered in my ear "Go, my son. Go, and succeed where Jakki and I failed; make our ancestors proud."

Jakki died in Amarrian Space, Father! Because the State rented him to an idiot, and because Grandpa and you wanted him in Space! Why?

I went up after that, I had to. My DNA and brain patterns were pod-compatible; I managed to graduate as a pilot although my family and the farm were sorely missed. I got my license. The State even cancelled my debt and gave me a rookie ship; I bought my first Kestrel after a couple of days. I travelled around far and wide and finally found this Korgans guy at a pilot's bar in Yulai.

I approached him and he looked up from the bottom of his glass and many

Illustrations: B. Borkur Eiriksson

deaths. Somehow he recognized me and spoke first. "Jakki's brother, right? I've seen your picture… he talked a lot 'bout you…"

I sat down and we emptied three bottles to Jakki's memory. "…And I was so *green* mate – way, *way too green* to pilot a ship with crew, and because I was so stupid it cost me a ship, and my crew and your brother their life…"

We emptied another three bottles to his crew's memory. He was from Nonni, too. We looked into each other's eyes, and with a single cry we kicked the shit out of each other. It took four Brutors to break us apart. He broke my nose; I think I broke his jaw.

I travelled to Luminaire after that. Watching Caldari Prime through the station windows, something broke inside me and I opened a comm-link with the farm.

"All for this, Father? For that rock? That's why Jakki died?"

"Jakki died fighting for home, son…"

"Jakki died in Amarrian Space, Father! Because the State rented him to an idiot, and because Grandpa and you wanted him in Space! Why?"

"Your ancestors' bones are there son. The Gallente boot…"

"Look out of *your* window, Father! Do you see any Gallente strolling around the farm? The war is over, Father, and has been since before you were born! Look at our stone-yard right in front of you, that's home! All I see here is a rock floating in the void, the same void that swallowed Jakki and denied his bones to the soil!" I cut the transmission with home and broke my hand and wrist against the station window; the steel-glass never noticed my beating.

A few days later I landed in the middle of a gate camp. I awoke in the clone vat and discovered they lie to you. They tell you you'll be the same, all your memories. But you're not. My palms did not have the fangs of glass from smashing the kitchen's window, just some fake skin marks made with a cosmetic laser. My wrist was brand new, my nose as if never broken.

They lie. The void had swallowed Jakki; now it had erased his memory from my bones and skin as if it had polished the name from Jakki's stone.

I cancelled my license and my clone contract and went back to the farm. Mum and sister were waiting for me at the door. Both jumped to hug me. Father saluted me.

"Father?"

He stood there. A Land Private saluting a Space Captain.

"Dad? I'm back! Won't you hug me?"

"With all due respect Sir, State Army regulations are clear…"

"Father!"

"…regarding the proper protocol…"

"FATHER!!"

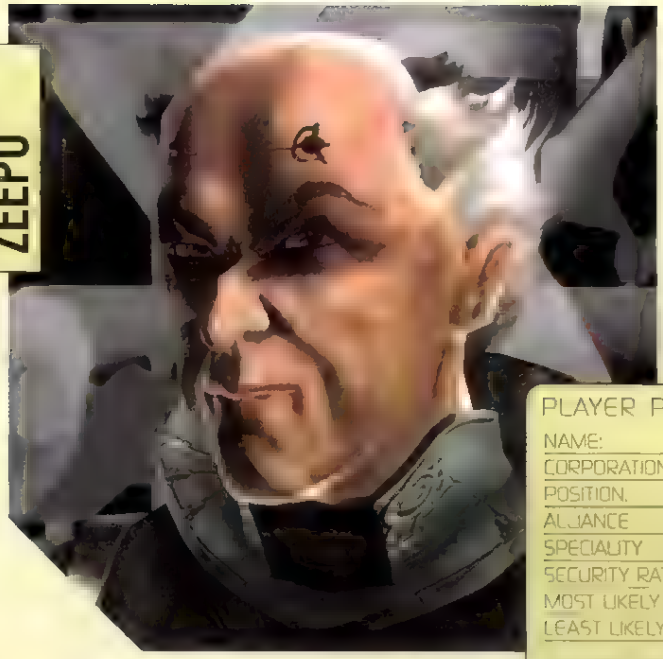
He stood there. I dropped to my knees sobbing. He just stood there in salute, staring at point in the air; he stood there until mother and Aikka carried me in.

Counting stones under the rain… Jakki's empty grave, his stone scribbled by my previous hands, the hands I had before the void gave me these new, smooth hands. Hands that now I almost clench into a fist ready to carve them all over again with glass and blood, but not today… not today… not now. Jakki's stone first, next mine, then Aikka's stone that will never be moved to her husband's stone-yard, nor her bones ever returned to the soil. After I returned home she decided to go up, no matter how much I tried to talk her out of it… yesterday little sister married the void as a Targeting Specialist aboard a Scorpion-class Battleship in some lawless space pocket. No body, just the news.

I make a fist with my smooth hands and watch Father under the raindrops as he scribbles Aikka's funeral stone, just behind Grandpa's… Is he shedding some tears? It's hard to see from here, with the rain.

A registered pod-pilot since February 2005, Fran has written more than 30 short stories for The Library section of the EVE Forums. More recently, he has teamed up with other EVE writers to work on a new novel, Barriers. *Comments? franmacjus@hotmail.com*

ZEEPO



PLAYER PROFILE

NAME:	**Zeepo**
CORPORATION:	**Viziam [Vi]**
POSITION:	**Freelance**
ALLIANCE	**None**
SPECIALITY	**Scamming, Stealing, General Fraud**
SECURITY RATING:	**3.5**
MOST LIKELY TO SAY	**"It wasn't me, it was him!"**
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY	**N/A – he'll say anything if it will get him out of a tight spot**

The value of the human life has never been cheaper than it is today. For 30m ISK, a veteran capsuleer can insure themselves for loss of life, and the only inconvenience of waking up in a clone vat is a loss of hair, fleeting nausea and the realisation that you're 40-odd jumps from where you wanted to be. By far the worst aspect of dying is reawakening to the fact that you've lost a billion in hardware. In comparison to losing a ship, dying is a trifling inconvenience.

Which is perhaps why characters like Zeepo are so universally despised. He's no murderer, he rarely travels in a combat-capable ship and were he to be put in a combat situation where he was at a direct advantage, he would most likely turn tail and run away. What he *does* do is steal, forage and deceive in order that he may acquire the assets of others, often to a value far exceeding the most expensive clone. Zeepo takes livelihoods not lives.

"I guess you could say I'm a kleptomaniac businessman with ownership issues," smiles the middle-aged Amarrian from inside one of the converted cargo holds of his ship. "However, I do like to venture into the field of lab sales and ore relocation."

SMASH AND GRAB

Inside the many other less opulent holding areas of his outwardly unappealing Bestower, Zeepo is ferrying ore that has been recently liberated from its rightful owner. As is the way of the ore thief, he sidles up to a cargo container and swipes the contents. Unbelievably, many pilots don't notice until the cargo container crumbles into dust. "Granted, it's not the most lucrative way to earn a living," he admits, "but it's how I got started and I like to keep my hand in from time to time." For Zeepo, the scam isn't so much about the taking, as the reaction it attracts: "As an opportunist, it's important to be able to talk your way out of any trouble," he says before recounting a recent 'ore relocation' operation in Amarr, when he was approached by a small fleet of concerned pilots. "I claimed that I was repossessing ore which had been stolen from asteroid belts by other races who had no right to mine there. They took the bait and I avoided trouble that day."

LAB RAT

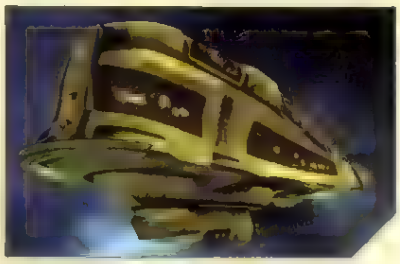
Of course, Zeepo still has his eye on bigger acquisitions and remains infamous for scamming millions out of unsuspecting manufacturers by offering to sell lab and factory slots that he didn't have. It's this trade that has caused many to question the determination of CONCORD to stamp out the practise. That it now has (thanks to recent changes to the office-renting system, combined with ownership tags placed on cargo containers), has meant that ore thieves and 'lab scammers' will have to adapt or go out of business. Zeepo admits that the past few months have been difficult. "I've been sightseeing," he says sarcastically. "Well, yes, I've been lying low for the past few weeks. It seems that one of my 'customers' was a blood relation of a very powerful alliance leader, and I found myself pursued even more vigorously than usual."

RACE RELATIONS

Of his many attempts to extort, Zeepo names his 'Treasure Hunt' sting as the most enjoyable. Many days were spent preparing the event, where pilots were invited to race against each other for a prize that, obviously, did not exist.

"I had to get the maximum revenue possible, so there was a substantial entry fee and as part of the race contestants had to bring me 10 items, all of them deliberately expensive ones. When they reached me and handed over the items, I'd tell them they'd won and they then had to race to a system more than 15 jumps away to collect the prize. After the last contestant handed over his 10 items I made a run for it."

As an opportunist, it's important to be able to talk your way out of any trouble



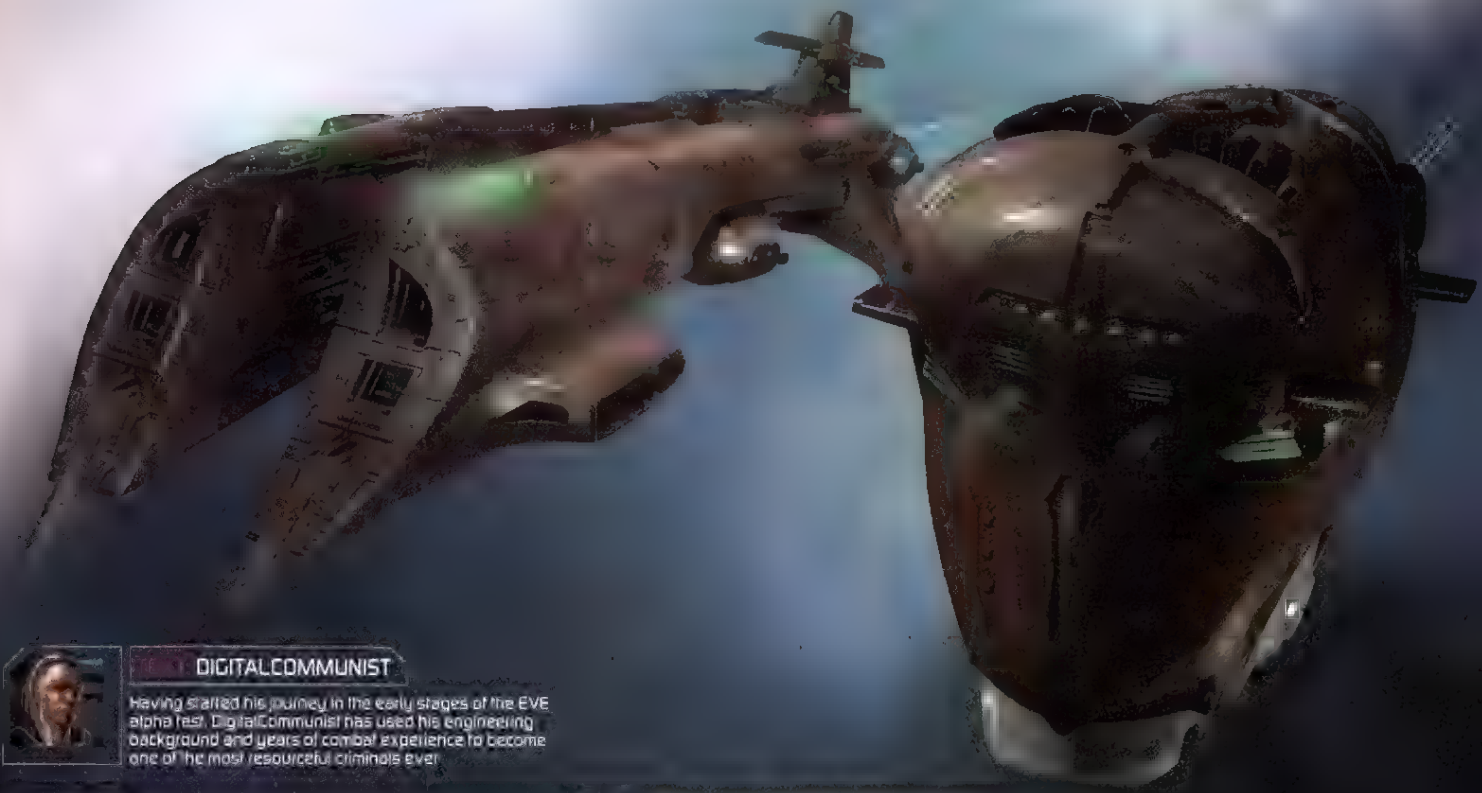
Zeepo has an entire fleet of Bestowers; the SS Smash and Grab is his favourite...

MONEY TALKS

Zeepo doesn't disclose how much he's acquired through ill gotten means: "That would be vulgar," he says, arching an eyebrow. "I try to operate a system of client confidentiality; of course it is my clients who often reveal our business dealings and that is up to them. Often they are angered in some way, and their anger often casts them in a worse light than me."

"In my profession, one has to use one's wits and intellect to survive, so it would be unfitting to conduct one's self in a rude or offensive manor. Therefore, I always try to remain polite and courteous. As for remorse? Sometimes I feel guilt over what I do. Some people simply accept that they have been scammed and are nice about it. That can make you feel very guilty, but the guilt soon passes!"

"I'm sure you said I am being paid for this interview, didn't you..?"



TEXT: DIGITALCOMMUNIST

Having started his journey in the early stages of the EVE alpha test, DigitalCommunist has used his engineering background and years of combat experience to become one of the most resourceful criminals ever.

THE VENERABLE BATTLESHIP IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST DESTRUCTIVE CLASS OF SHIP. FROM SKIRMISH WARFARE TO ALL-OUT FLEET BATTLES, THEY HAVE SEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY LEVEL OF ACTION. BUT WITH TECH II BATTLECRUISERS AND CAPITAL CLASS SHIPS ENTERING THE SCENE, ARE THEY DOOMED TO QUIET EXTINCTION?

3D MODELS: JOHN AUGAR AND WILLEM VAN BILJON

BATTLESHIPS

TEST SCORES

This issue we've decided not to rate each ship, but instead highlight which types of skills are important if you wish to get the most out of the ship in question. What this means is that if a ship has a Drones Rating of 5, that doesn't necessarily mean the ship is a naturally good drone carrier (although it probably is), only that to make best use of its features you should prioritize your skill training to secure some pretty high-end Drone skills. Categories were judged based on priority and overall added benefit to the ship.

With Red Moon Rising at the forefront of change in combat, and our thoughts and ambitions focused on the new capital-class ships, I found it relevant to step back and take a look at how battle takes place in the world of EVE. With that said, this article is devoted to the eight Battleships belonging to the four empires and why, despite numerous advances in other fields, they will always serve an important combat role. Understanding this fact requires a certain insight into the mathematics of scale, in terms of economics and potential. To put it simply, they're readily available, and they kick a lot of ass. New pilots will find themselves sporting a brand new Battleship long before they have the skills or funds in place to obtain a Heavy Assault Cruiser (see *Testflight* in issue #001). Additionally, Battleships have the greatest defensive, offensive and configuration potential, coupled with an inherently large number of slots and an operating range as high as 150km, so the battlefield is never a 'sure thing'. Past experience in 0.0 and Empire warfare also tells me that a significant portion of morale and victory hinges on the age-old Battleship kill and death ratio. They are still viewed as the pinnacle of personal skill and investment, and destroying one tends to satiate those who seek to 'win'. Quickly browsing through a list of 'kill board' websites, one can confirm this by noting the special highlighting of Battleship kills. Therefore, piloting one is often a double-edged sword; necessary and effective on one side, while on the other being one of the most significant losses you can incur.

AMARR

ARMAGEDDON

Amarr ships, on the whole, tend to favour the two extremes of warfare over tactical versatility. Battleships are no exception, and the Armageddon is one of the most destructive of all eight, mostly thanks to its Rate of Fire (ROF) bonus, and the ability to field a full set of Heavy Drones. Being a tier-one platform, you also have the added benefit of a reduced build cost. However, all this greatness can only come with a significant sacrifice to your other systems. The most obvious is a lack of missile hardpoints, a feature shared by only one other Battleship – the Dominix. The other is a very restrictive number of medium slots. Another limitation comes from energy weapons themselves, which [illegible] easily fall prey to tracking disruptors or excessive [illegible] fitting. Thus, my immediate reaction upon encountering an Armageddon is to expect massive and direct damage, then find ways to get around its tracking or optimal range. This is not always the case, as I have encountered and fitted ECM in very specific situations. Unfortunately for the confused pilot who tried it against me, I had not elected to refit from a recent fleet battle and still had my backup sensor arrays. Mad skills or dumb luck; I like to let people decide for themselves.

SKILL PRIORITY

Drones	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

In terms of raw firepower and defensive capabilities, this Tier 1 Battleship is almost on a par with its Tier II counterparts, but its Achilles' heels are many.

APOCALYPSE

The Apocalypse is, in theory, the ultimate battleship, because [illegible] takes the phrase [illegible] A fully sustainable armor [illegible] coupled with a superstructure that can support a myriad of weapons, sounds unstoppable. In many one-on-one engagements, this remains true – it is one of the few ships that can give 'Blastechron' pilots such as myself a hard time, especially if capacitor denial systems are involved. However, in practice victory can be less than decisive, and theorics fall prey to such things as overwhelming force, electronic warfare, and varied damage types. Many of the gangs I've flown in tend [illegible] most [illegible] consuming) [illegible] and will seldom match the fire[illegible] of other dam[illegible] dealers. Wh[illegible] harmed by multiple targets, even a very expensive armor tank will fail – and expense is a big factor of how well an Apocalypse performs. The primary role requires good capacitor resistance and repair modules to take full advantage of, whereas other ships are more reliant on skill points – which does not result in massively expensive setups. Admittedly, the vast majority of my encounters with this ship are in fleet battles or with unwary NPC hunters. However, the few Apoc pilots capable and experienced enough to use defensive potential *offensively* are the most dangerous.

SKILL PRIORITY

Drones	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

Equipped properly, the Apocalypse has awesome staying power and has firepower to match, but it is not the be all and end all many believe it to be.

MINMATAR

TYPHOON

Jack of all trades, master of none – that is the essence of the Typhoon, and understanding how to use the ship requires understanding of that fact. To begin with, your weapon systems are equally split across the three types: turrets, missiles and drones. Meaning? The two bonuses it has for projectiles will, at best, affect only four of its eight high slots. On top of which, being a tier-one vessel with a tier-two slot layout [illegible] severe powergrid issues. [illegible] so evenly balanced is not optimal [illegible] a given fight, but the advantage is that you make it difficult for the enemy to field something which directly counters you. This gives Typhoon pilots the ability to run around with a [illegible] engaging weaker ships, ranging from Frigate all the way up to Battleship, relatively easy. Should one weapon system fail for any reason, all is not lost. Many would argue that the Tempest performs better, both as an autocannon and an artillery platform, but there are some crucial differences in close-range capability I have found to be relevant. The main one is tanking potential, the second is style. Yes, *style*. The Typhoon has the seventh low slot of a Megathron, with the low cap drain and signature radius of the Tempest, on a ship that is faster than both *and* equipped with Nosferatus. That said, it can absorb and avoid a substantial amount of firepower, as far as injector-oriented ships go. Being the ill-perceived underdog of Battleships often means enemies will underestimate and make foolish decisions. In wars where hurting morale can be as effective as hurting the wallet, there is nothing worse than having your tier-two ship blown out by an oversized trash bin.

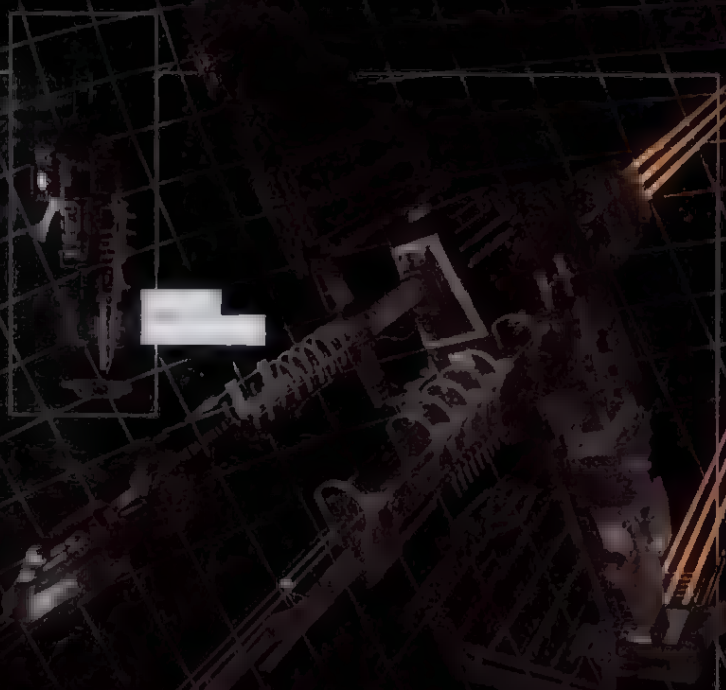
SKILL PRIORITY

Drones	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

Probably the most versatile Battleship in service, the Typhoon works better as a fleet support vessel, boosting the damage potential of harder-hitting ships.

TEMPEST

Being one of the few ships with a slot layout supporting both a shield or armour tank, its unsurprising the Tempest is better known for damage-hurling potential. With Minmatar ships being designed around hit-and-run tactics, you may wonder how this could possibly work on some of the least mobile ships available. It simply comes down to the Tempest's massive single volley damage, and ability to obliterate a ship instantly with sufficient numbers. With some fervent pilots turning the quest for the largest wrecking hit attainable into the EVE equivalent of a measurement contest, Tempests have become relatively common in large battles, and I don't believe RMR will force a change to this. As an artillery platform, it would be a sin to try and armour tank, if it were not impossible with the grid limitations. As a result, many find themselves fitting gyrostabilizers and some form of shielding to soak up damage. This makes the Tempest a very powerful tool in surgical strikes, as well as being the best gate sniper. From experience, I've found the extra medium slot to be the key difference between piloting an autocannon Tempest, and a blaster-fitted Megathron. Even a single tracking disruptor, warp disruptor, or target jammer can have a substantial impact on the outcome of a small fight. Unfortunately, the racial speed advantage of Minmatar ships tends to go unnoticed, as the opportunities to utilize it are highly specific, as in the case of Blasterthrons. It's fair to assume that your success in countering a Tempest largely depends on its fitting. As a long range ship, you can bet that any amount of tracking disruptors will wreak havoc with 1400mms, once again establishing that the size of your barrel means nothing if you're shooting blanks.



SKILL PRIORITY

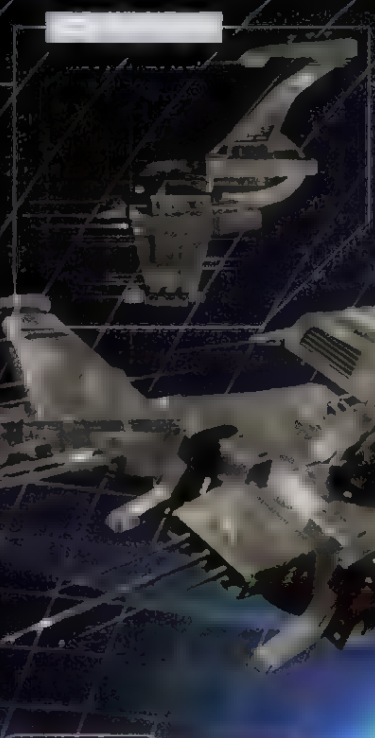
Drones	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

With surprise on your side, and at range, the Tempest is without equal. Like the Typhoon (and in the right hands), it rewards the creative, strategy-minded pilot.

CALDARI

SCORPION

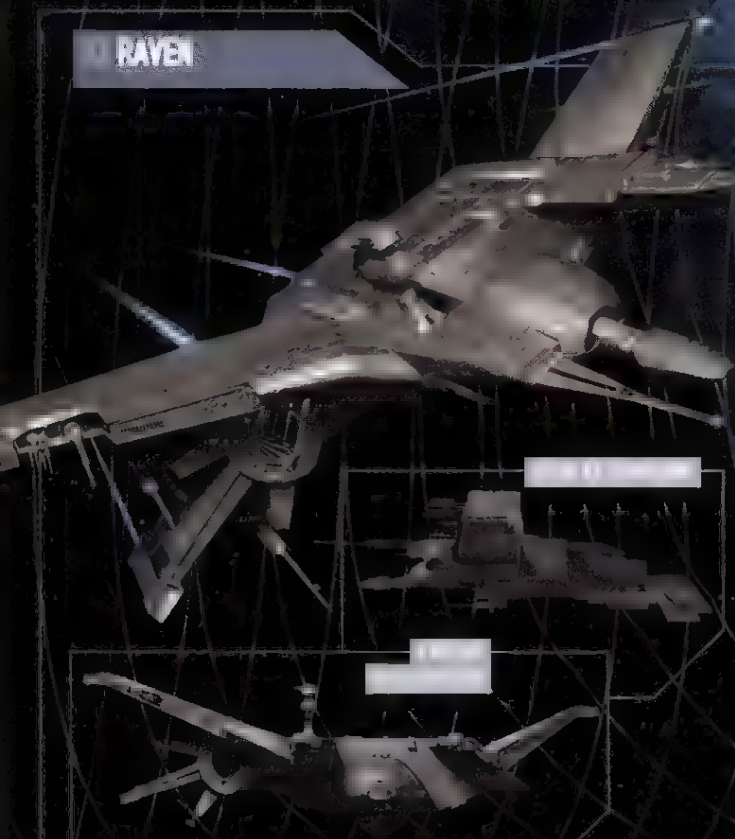
Many of the design principles behind Caldari ships stem from the need for tactical superiority, rather than sheer firepower. Thus, the Scorpion can be one of the weakest yet one of the most fearsome Battleships, with its eight medium slots. It has the ability to change the rules of the game as events unfold, and render multiple hostiles little more than useless, floating hulks of metal in space. In terms of entry barrier, a Scorpion is the most newbie-friendly of all, thanks to its high reliance on Electronics skills. However, placing this tactical ace-in-the-hole in the hands of an unskilled pilot can prove [illegible]. Scorpion pilots must keep a good eye on the battlefield if they are to recognize the greatest threats and predict events before they unfold to maximize the effectiveness of electronic countermeasures (ECM). For this amount of capability on such a weak platform, Scorpion pilots tend to be among the first to have their hulls vaporized. It was the first Battleship I obtained, purchased from a friend named Morphix two years ago, so a significant portion of my early combat encounters were spent dodging death by mere seconds. However, if used under the correct circumstances, it will completely negate whatever high skills or powerful modules your enemy may possess. So the best counters are often the simplest, requiring you to overwhelm it with [illegible] jam it to prevent it [illegible] harm. Alternatives include drones and friend or foe (FOF) missiles, but these can be more difficult or time consuming due to odd behavior.



SKILL PRIORITY

[illegible]	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

RAVEN



The Caldari [illegible] without the means [illegible] fortified [illegible]

Raven, past a certain range becomes the most damaging vessel short of a Dreadnaught. At close range, the penalties that missile users suffer (namely travel time) lose much of their severity, making the Raven a very capable ship in nearly all types of engagements. Its biggest advantage lies in being able to adapt to the opponent's defenses by changing ammo type, as well as avoiding the limitations of tracking and optimal that turret users face (against other Battleships, at least). The Raven is also the most capable shield tanker of all eight types, which can spell both good and bad news for the pilot inside. Shield tanking is designed to provide massive amounts of regeneration over [illegible] increased [illegible] power on a Raven [illegible] other ship. The key difference [illegible] while an Apocalypse could obtain sustainability relatively easily with its ship bonus, the Raven has the greater firepower and potential in the end. Unfortunately, in almost all cases, spending billions is simply not an option. Thus, the Raven can fail to survive in a prolonged fight and to help speed this process even further, one should find ways to neutralize the effect of any Nosferatus or use it to advantage. There are ways to counter missiles themselves, thus adding to the list of exploitable weaknesses of the ship but, in reality, there are few situations where using smartbombs is smart (pun intended).

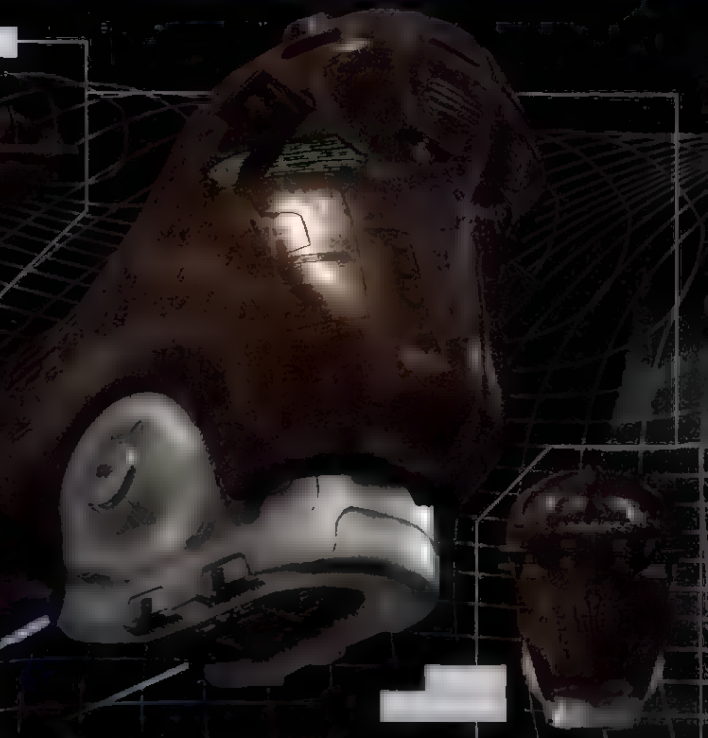
SKILL PRIORITY

Drones	Missiles
Electronics	Mechanic
Engineering	Navigation
Gunnery	

On the attacking side, the Raven is both versatile and highly damaging, but defensively it's an open book.

DOMINIX

To some, the 'Dom' is spoken of with affectionate undertones; to most it's synonymous with a 'giant misshapen forehead' – with the minority being mocked at every chance. For that very reason, along with having a pitiful powergrid and capacitor for a Battleship, I would prefer the sleek and sexy styles of an Ishtar. But as mentioned earlier, one of the great advantages of Battleships remains the economics of purchase and replacement. For roughly [illegible] cost, and full insurance, a [illegible] will do a better job. Oddly enough, I suspect the real reason for its popularity is that the Dominix doubles as a decent deep-space mining ship. Traditionally, the ship has been limited to small engagements at close range since it could not deliver a substantial amount of direct firepower across distances, rendering it useless in a fleet battle. This, however, seems to have changed with sentry drones allowing it to venture out and inflict considerable pain. At the time of writing, Red Moon Rising appears to be just over the horizon, but it doesn't take much to realize that the value of a Dominix is staggering, and will only continue to rise with new drones being thrown into the mix. Who knows, it may be enough to alleviate my fears of being seen piloting one. Until then, there are a few simple ways of giving Dominix pilots a hard time. ECM is effective when combined with teamwork tactics, like having one person lead the drones on a chase and the second person drop target lock and close the distance, denying the Dominix pilot a chance to switch to the greatest threat. In the case of sentry drones, being as large and immobile as they are, it's far wiser to destroy a few first and drastically lower the damage output before focusing on the ship.



SKILL PRIORITY

Drones	■■■■■	Missiles	■■■■■
Electronics	■■■■■	Mechanic	■■■■■
Engineering	■■■■■	Navigation	■■■■■
Gunnery	■■■■■		

Against even a marginally superior force, the Dom can easily be undone, but if you love drones (and who doesn't?) few ships are as enjoyable to command.

MEGATHRON

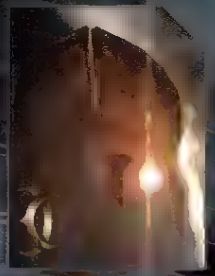
Whether it's the menacing look, threatening name, or sheer destructive potential, a Megathron commands a certain level of respect. It perfectly embodies the main elements of Gallente combat strategy – close-range warfare supported by drones. As a Blasterthron it is arguably the most difficult ship to fly for a multitude of reasons. The foremost concerns the level of risk you take by engaging at such close quarters. You are left vulnerable to every weapon imaginable, so crossing that distance is rarely a guarantee for success. Despite the many individuals who choose to delude themselves with this, the outcome of a fight is largely decided upon the micromanagement abilities and timing skills of the Megathron pilot. The second reason behind this difficulty barrier is related to skillpoints and fitting. Put simply, the differences between a superb and terrible setup can boil down to a mere quarter CPU. The Megathron is also unique for its ability to effectively utilize large Railguns. However, due to the ranges involved, I have never found it terribly useful outside of fleets or NPC bashing. Regardless of weapon type, Megathron pilots tend to suffer most from sustainability issues. Any battle involving attacks to the capacitor or prolonged engagement will effectively spell disaster, and the associated humiliation that comes with it. All things said and done, the greatest advantage lies in the psychological impact of being on the receiving end of such aggressive manoeuvers. Staying calm and reacting quickly is the best method of subjugating the threat.

SKILL PRIORITY

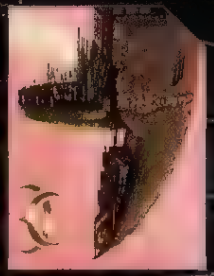
Drones	■■■■■	Missiles	■■■■■
Electronics	■■■■■	Mechanic	■■■■■
Engineering	■■■■■	Navigation	■■■■■
Gunnery	■■■■■		

Its close-combat abilities will make the Megathron a priority target, but once it gets its teeth into the heat of a battle, it rarely lets go.

BATTLESHIPS AT A GLANCE



ARMAGEDDON
Number in Service: 7,370
Average price – all regions: 61,112,630
Variants: Imperial Issue



APOCALYPSE
Number in Service: 12,876
Average price – all regions: 103,160,603
Variants: Navy Issue & Imperial Issue

TYPHOON
Number in Service: 2,393
Average price – all regions: 71,987,772
Variants: none

TEMPEST
Number in Service: 5,928
Average price – all regions: 101,135,404
Variants: Tempest Fleet Issue

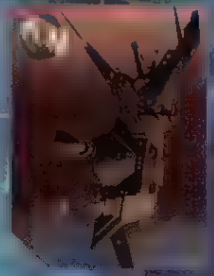
	MODULE / EQUIPMENT BAYS				BASE POWER VALUES				DAMAGE RESISTENCE SHIELD / ARMOUR					SKILL BONUS	TARGETING			
	HIGH SLOTS (TURRET / MISSILE)	MED SLOTS	LOW SLOTS	DRONE BAY (m^3)	BASE SPEED / PROPULSION DRIVE	POWER GRID	CPU	CAPACITOR	BASE SHIELD / ARMOUR	EM resist %	EXPLOSIVE resist %	KINETIC resist %	THERMAL resist %	BATTLESHIP (RACE SPECIFIC) per level	BASE TARGETING RANGE	SCAN RES	SENSOR STRENGTH	SIG RADIUS
ARMAGEDDON	8 (7/-)	3	8	125	125ms / Fusion 8	16,500	450	4250	4375 / 5313	0 / 60	60 / 20	40 / 25	20 / 35	Large Energy Turret Capacitor Usage (-10%) Large Energy Turret Range of Fire (+5%)	65km	110mm	Radar 17	370m
APOCOLYPSE	8 (8/2)	4	7	75	115ms / Fusion 8	19,500	500	4800	4969 / 6000	0 / 60	60 / 20	40 / 25	20 / 35	Large Energy Turret Capacitor Usage (-10%) Maximum Capacitor Capacity (+5%)	67km	95mm	Radar 20	400m
TYPHOON	8 (4/4)	4	7	175	150ms / Plasma 10	12,500	600	4000	4969 / 4375	0 / 70	60 / 10	40 / 25	20 / 35	Large Projectile Turret Firing Speed (+5%) Large Projectile Turret Optimal Range (+10%)	60km	115mm	Ladar 18	320m
TEMPEST	8 (6/4)	5	6	75	140ms / Plasma 9	15,500	550	4250	5563 / 4969	0 / 70	60 / 10	40 / 25	20 / 35	Large Projectile Turret Firing Speed (+5%) Large Projectile Turret Damage (+5%)	62km	100mm	Ladar 19	340m
SCORPION	6 (4/4)	8	4	75	115ms / Pulse 7	9,000	750	4250	5315 / 4375	0 / 60	60 / 10	40 / 25	20 / 45	ECM Target Jammer Strength (+5%) ECM Target Jammer Optimal Range (+20%)	90km	75mm	Grav. 24	480m
RAVEN	8 (4/6)	6	5	75	115ms / Pulse 7	9,500	700	4250	6000 / 5313	0 / 60	60 / 10	40 / 25	20 / 45	Cruise/Seige Launcher Range of Fire (+5%) Cruise/Torpedo Velocity (+10%)	75km	85mm	Grav. 22	460m
DOMINIX	6 (6/-)	5	7	375	120ms / Ion 7	9,000	600	4000	4375 / 4969	0 / 60	60 / 10	40 / 35	20 / 35	Large Hybrid Turret Damage (+5%) Drone HP and Damage (+10%)	70km	90mm	Mag. 22	420m
MEGATHRON	8 (7/2)	4	7	125	125ms / Ion 8	15,500	550	4500	4969 / 5313	0 / 60	60 / 10	40 / 35	20 / 35	Large Hybrid Turret Damage (+5%) Large Hybrid Turret Track Speed (+5%)	72km	95mm	Mag. 21	400m

CONCLUSION

When reviewing the unique traits of these ships, you will quickly realize that each favours a certain style of approach to combat. Yet piloting a Battleship does not constrain you to only a handful of viable setups, in the way that other classes do. They remain flexible enough that each pilot can shift focus to determine his/her exact preferences. If you treat them as highly modular tools of war, you will find yourself forgetting about the quest for the ultimate setup. The best setup is the one which your enemy doesn't want to deal with, not one which can deal with anybody.

Perpetual chaos and conflict in the world of EVE will ensure a new enemy each day. Those who consider the challenge for constant adaptation to be part of the fun welcome it with open arms. Capital ships will add depth on a scale never seen before and Support ships will be ever more present. But they are mere additions to a core that existed from the moment we laid eyes on deep space and said "we're gonna need something bigger".

SCORPION
Number in Service: 7,575
Average price – all regions: [illegible]
Variants: Rattlesnake



RAVEN
Number in Service: 14,530
Average price – all regions: 102,410,[illegible]
Variants: Raven Navy Issue

DOMINIX
Number in Service: 7,586
Average price – all regions: 61,501,238
Variants: None

MEGATHRON
Number in Service: 10,411
Average price – all regions: 101,812,729
Variants: Navy Issue & Federate Issue

NEXT ISSUE: COMBAT RECONNAISSANCE SHIPS

CHARLES DANE

CCP STARTDATE: February 2004
POSITION: Community Manager
AKA: 'Kieron'

NOT ONLY IS HE THE LINK THAT NURTURES THE BOND BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND THE EVER-EXPANDING COMMUNITY OF EVE PLAYERS, BUT ALSO, AS THE LEADER OF THE INTERSTELLAR SERVICES DEPARTMENT (ISD), CCP'S COMMUNITY MANAGER IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE EVE ISN'T SEEN MERELY AS A COMPUTER GAME, BUT A LIVING, BREATHING UNIVERSE...

So was it a love of gaming or career ambition that brought you to CCP?
I'd been playing *Diablo* and inhabiting Blizzard Chat for a number of months, and made some friends in the process. They all jumped to *Ultima Online*, something that I was hesitant to do because of the subscription fee. I just couldn't wrap my mind around paying $10 per month for a game! I resisted for a couple of months, until I was given a copy of *UO* for Christmas back in '97. I got hooked by the game, enjoyed the role-playing, the community and the new experience, and when applications for the Counsellor programme opened up (level one customer support, staffed by volunteers), I applied.

The thought of turning gaming into a career didn't enter my mind for a long time. Sure, once the MMOG industry had established itself I thought of throwing some applications around, but I didn't think running events or volunteer customer support was enough experience to put on a résumé. I went through a stretch of life when I considered applying for a GM position, but moving from California to Austin, Texas (where Origin, *UO* publisher was based) wasn't feasible. It wasn't until I was involved in the Event Moderator programme that I thought a career in the industry was a possibility. All in all, I would have to say it was a love of gaming and online community interaction than a career choice.

Were you already an EVE fan before you came to work for CCP?
Other than playing a couple of space-genre single-player games based on *Star Trek, Star Wars* or the like, I hadn't considered a space MMOG. EVE opened my eyes to other parts of the industry that I was not aware of. The scope of the game, the complexity and the environment were – and still are – incredible.

We know you from the forums of course, but there must be more to your working day than trawling through posts on the EVE message board?
Well, a typical day consists of reading and answering a lot of e-mail, reading, posting on and moderating the forums and spending a fair amount of time managing the volunteer programme. There will be days when issues crop up and the forums take all my attention, others when the e-mail load is heavy, yet others when the volunteers take up a day with the support they need. Managing the communication between player base and Devs, along with overseeing the volunteer programme at the same time, is a challenge, but one that I enjoy facing every day. Each day brings something different.

To someone new to the game, how would you explain the importance of the volunteer program (Interstellar Services Department – ISD) to the game play of EVE?
It may not seem so at first blush, but there is little in EVE's fabric that has not been touched by the volunteers. New accounts are greeted by STAR, Aurora holds dynamic content events, the Bug Hunt team (ECAID) works tirelessly on the test servers and the forums are overseen by CRC. I don't think EVE would be where it is today without the efforts of ISD teams.

Being based in the States, as opposed to being with the team in Iceland, must be difficult?
There are times when working off-site presents its own set of difficulties, but the Dev team, especially *Oveur* and *Hellmar*, have been awesome with their support. I don't have the option of walking over to someone's office for a chat, but all the Devs have been great in their communication with me. Besides, it seems like a lot of internal communication is done via email and MSN, so I am not out of the loop too much. Overall, I couldn't be happier with the team than I am now.

As someone who has a unique position within the community, between player base and developer, how do you view the relationship between the two?
I think there is a great relationship between the player base and the Devs – just look at the feedback from FanFest 2005! How many game companies can claim to have players willing to travel to the frozen north for a player meet, or Devs that are willing to interact with the players on such a scale?

However, as with any interaction between strong wills and beliefs in a project such as EVE, there are conflicts of vision and the desired direction of EVE, but in the end it all works out. The players put forth their ideas, the Devs do likewise, there is discussion on the forums, email, chats and internal meetings, then the Devs make their decision and it is implemented. Most of the time, the decision is a good one and we hear about it from the players. However, there are times when the decision resulted in the opposite of our goal and we *still* hear about it from the players.

The day the dialogue between players and Devs dies is the day I start to worry about the longevity of EVE. From what I have seen from both parties, I have nothing to worry about.

Would you agree CCP was quite aloof in the early days of EVE? Has it been a conscious effort to promote better communication between developer and community?
If CCP appeared aloof in the early days of the game, I believe it was more by accident than intention. You have to keep in mind that in the alpha and early beta days, there was not a single Dev at CCP with any MMOG production experience on his CV. They were, quite literally, making it all up as they went along.

Was there a conscious effort on the part of CCP to change? No, I think the flow of information changed more by accident and through the introduction of new staff than by design. Oveur joining the Dev Team as Lead Producer last year made a huge difference. The Devs have seen how some forum, game and IRC interaction with the players can be informative, rewarding and fun. The results speak for themselves.

Seriously – and be honest – from your dealings with them, what do you think of the EVE Community in general?
The EVE community is awesome! Although it's a cross-section of RL society, with a kaleidoscope of personalities, backgrounds, education, temperament etc, it is, for the most part, driven by the same thing that drives the Dev team – a true love for the game and enjoyment of the experience gained by playing EVE.

How often do you play EVE?
Enough to realize that I play too casually to keep up with the hardcore players.

Carebear or pirate?
Let's adjust the terms a bit, shall we? How about Player vs Environment (PvE) or Player vs Player (PvP)? I'm more into PvE experience than PvP. I like the role-playing aspect of games, watching prime fiction unfold, having a potential effect on the way fiction develops and enjoying a good story. I'll fight if attacked, but in general, I am not the aggressor. Oh, and no, I'm not going to say who my main is!

Fanfest 2006. If you had your way, where would it be held and, given infinite resources, what events would you organise for us?
Infinite resources, huh? Woo hoo! I would love to see three Fanfests – Reykjavik, Europe (Continental or UK) and North America. Events? More of the same, and much bigger! The players seemed to like the opportunity to see the presentations, compete against each other in the Championship (yes, the format is going to change for '06), sit down with the Devs during the discussions and toss back a couple of beers after hours. Maybe hold a team-based scavenger hunt, either in-game or out of game for fun. I'm still trying to figure out what direction the Quafe Queen/fashion show should head for next year, though.

AND WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING..?

What are you listening to?
Right now, I'm on a bit of a goth kick with Collide, Kidneythieves, Lacuna Coil and Marilyn Manson taking turns on the mp3 player. Depeche Mode and the Cure are also favourite stand bys.

Favourite films?
Period movies and science fiction, including *Master and Commander*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Matrix* (not the sequels) *Serenity* and the like.

When you're not reading forum posts?
The works of J.R.R. Tolkien, Steven Brust, Neal Stephenson, George Alec Effinger and Capo Ferro.

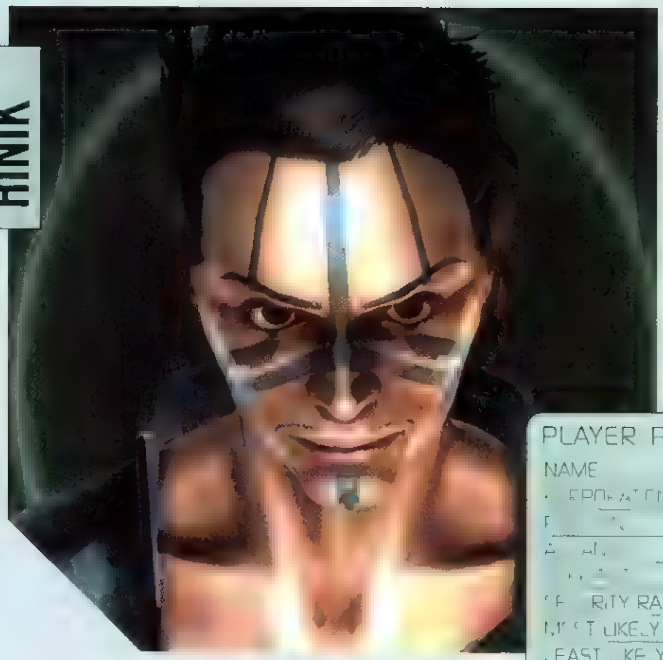
Being American, we assume you like sports players in shoulder pads?
I'm an NHL fan and follow the Pittsburgh Penguins religiously.

Favourite EVE ship?
The Jovian Echelon and Wraith. EVE and H.R. Giger collide into ships that are mysterious, visceral and deadly.

Favourite item in the EVE store?
The coffee caps. I go through a lot of coffee during a normal working day, and the thermochroma change is just cool. Er, hot. Well, you get the idea.

The face of Kieron as you know him, and (main) the face on which the hair is based

HINIK

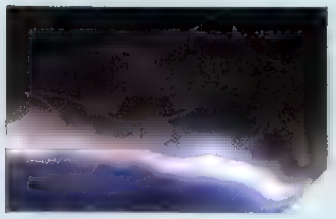


PLAYER PROFILE

NAME	Hinik
CORPORATION	Arcane Frankologies [ATUF]
[illegible]	'Senior Ganker'
[illegible]	None
[illegible]	Drone Control / Space Art
SECURITY RATING	-9.6
MOST LIKELY TO SAY	"Can."
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY	"I'm bored."

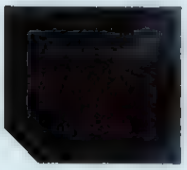
His arms are too long and there should be four of them, but the latest work of so-called 'can art' to spring up in Empire space, *Half a Vitruvian man*, is an impressive (ahem) body of work nonetheless. Spread over 90,000km sq, it is a configuration that stands guard over an uninhabited and lifeless moon in the Jet system, and is apparently based on some old Earth drawings, although, of course, no records exist of its origins. Regardless of its accuracy, as a tourist attraction it's worth a visit. It's not the maelstrom of beauty that surrounds the EVE Gate, but it beats staring at rocks on a Sunday night.

Hinik is the architect of the Vitruvian arrangement – his third piece of cargo container art to date. Despite his meticulous and considered efforts, however, he is a pilot whose appetite for uncomplicated destruction is a most without equal. Admire his work, but cross his path and you are more likely to end up doing so as a frozen corpse



The FRICK shark, sans laser beams

Surely punctuation isn't too much to ask?



Half a Vitruvian Man is the latest Hinik creation, one unlikely ever to be whole

SHARK'S TEETH

Falling foul of his tutors at the Federal Navy Academy, Hinik was first employed by Dreamscape; seeing his colleague Velsharoon defect to piracy, it was then that he was tempted towards a life of crime. Soon at war with SAS, and in a genuine gesture to aid Dreamscape, Hinik joined the enemy ranks as a secret agent but found himself turning traitor, quickly intoxicated by the thrill of combat. The relationship with SAS soon turned sour, however, and his requests to rejoin Dreamscape were understandably rejected. A chance encounter with Velsharoon saw Hinik applying to join the renowned combat corp Sharks with Frickin' Laser Beams.

"FRICK was a breath of fresh air after the bad feelings between me and the rest of SAS," he says. "We were given freedom from the constraints of image and, as long as we were honourable, and stylish, we were given *carte blanche* to roam free and extract the panties from other inhabitants of the galaxy."

Hinik remained with the Sharks for more than a year, during which time the corp fought against Everlasting Vendetta, the Millineon Alliance and Fade Union.

"During my stay, we went from pirates to mercenaries who pirated between contracts, to pure mercenaries. Joining the Mercenary Coalition changed things for me. I could see the internal hypocrisy far easier than an outsider could have. Being a director only gave me more insight into why I didn't want to be there. The MC had grown into a much greater monster than I could have imagined it would when I first joined FRICK. Saying that you were 'politically neutral', then agreeing that a certain alliance had 'pissed us off', was just not what I wanted to be part of. I needed a corp where morality was much more clear-cut."

> As long as we were honourable, and stylish, we were given *carte blanche* to roam free and extract the panties from other inhabitants of the galaxy

TEDIUM-SIZED CAN

It is thanks to Velsharoon again that Hinik is now part of renowned pirate corp Arcane Frankologies: "ATUF is a fantastic place for me to be. It is the antithesis of Sharks at the point I left. No politics; if we dislike someone, we kill them… if people hunt us, we kill them! Hell, we just kill stuff."

Hinik calls himself an unambiguous pirate who sees piracy as a means to survive and succeed in a universe driven by muddy politics and dubious ethics

Against the image of a stereotypical pirate, Hinik is easy-going and affable Were it not for his penchant for waving his sidearm around in moments when he is agitated – which is often – he could pass for a reputable trader or mining mogul. But he is not driven by a need to acquire wealth, for his greatest motivation is to stave off the ennui that exists between battles. Combat is the thrill of the chase, and when that chase ends anticlimactically in a siege of a station where hours can pass before battle can commence, it is then that Hinik turns to his art.

"It takes a lot to overcome the boredom, but when the only other alternative is to camp enemies in a station that they'll never emerge from, I'd rather start building something than just sit there. The reaction at the end makes it worthwhile, but now in ATUF I'm rarely driven to such actions. The Vitruvian man was a commissioned piece, and in any case, unfinished. I grew tired of it." He waves his sidearm once more and flashes a rare smile. "Targets are more plentiful than they used to be."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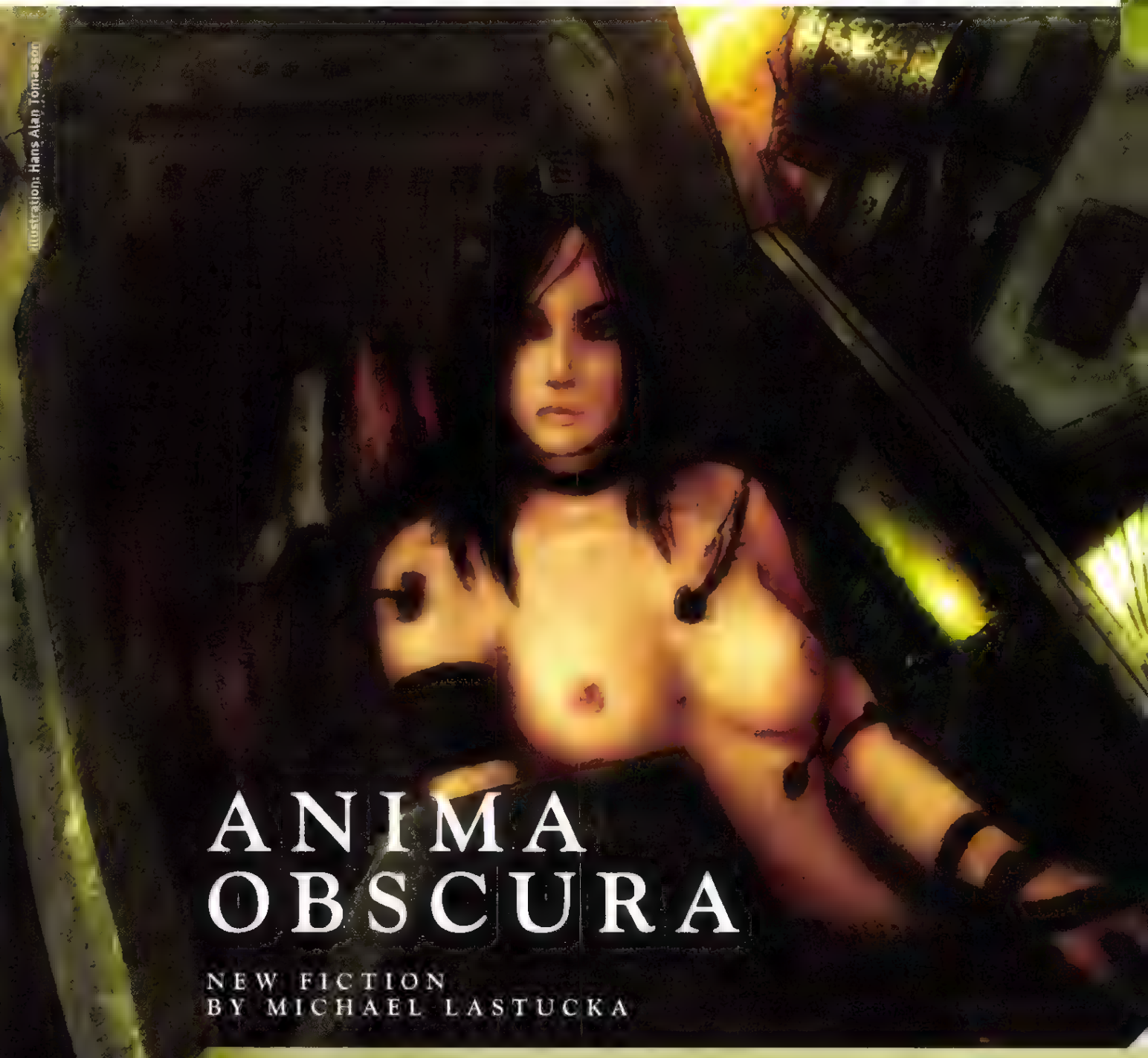


Illustration: Hans Alan Tomasson

ANIMA OBSCURA

NEW FICTION
BY MICHAEL LASTUCKA

Mireya stood on the hillside with her eyes closed, feeling the cool breeze blow against her back. Fine, black hair danced about her head, tickling the perfect porcelain skin of her face as her simple, black dress ruffled around her legs. She breathed the crisp, clean air. The smell of blossoms growing on the hills nearby was soothing. The wind felt good. The sun felt good.

But something was wrong.

The light from the sun on the other side of her eyelids faded fast, and the wind grew cold. It felt suddenly like icicles on her skin. She tried to hold herself, to keep some kind of warmth, but her arms moved sluggishly, as if through water. She could barely move, the cold penetrating deeply into her flesh. Then the wind died suddenly, and silence filled her ears. She dared to open her eyes. They opened slowly, as if she had been sleeping forever. Black. Nothing. *Panic.*

She flailed her arms, instinctively feeling outwards through the frigid liquid, somehow finding the emergency trigger. She pushed it, and the black collapsed around her in a fearful swirl of thick liquid and biotubing as the pod forcefully vented its fluid contents, replacing it with breathable air from the backup supply. Mireya slid naked to the bottom of the pod, gagging as her lungs expelled the fluid her body had been breathing. *So cold.* The interface tubes to her body had been retracted at some point, but she couldn't remember when. She pulled her feet out from the bundle of fine wires and gingerly brought herself up to a shaky stand.

A green telltale light assured her there was atmosphere on the other side of the armor plating. She grabbed the release handle and pulled, hard. The armor split on a diagonal like a giant crack, and the pod wall receded over itself in sections. The air was chilly, and her breath fogged

as she exhaled. Mireya found a small towel and a simple black dress in a storage locker in the pod bay. She dried off as best she could, put on the dress, and pulled her wet matted hair back behind her shoulders.

The pod bay was cramped, full of machinery and tubes. She knew she was on a ship, but didn't know how she knew that. She thought hard for a moment, trying to remember where she was and how she had got there. She had known how to get out of the pod, somehow. Yet nothing around her seemed familiar, and the growing fear in her chest wasn't eased at all by the silence.

The sleek surfaces of the room's walls and floors were barely lit by the ship's dull blue emergency lighting, but Mireya found what looked like a hatch or an airlock of some kind. Her hand moved almost on its own, trembling gently as it came to rest on a cold glass scanner plate set into the wall.

The massive, hardened airlock sealed the armoured interior shell of the ship, designed to protect the delicate machinery of the pod – and its occupant – cradled inside. Motors deep within the wall squealed into action, and in seconds a four-foot thick slab of crystalline carbonide pushed out and to one side, exposing an empty corridor. The floor was cold to her bare feet, and the air chilled her legs and arms as she walked out of the shell.

A screen set into the wall twitched awake as she walked near, and displayed some kind of recommended path for her to take through the hallway ahead. It was simple enough to memorize, but seemed odd to her somehow. Indirect. As she followed the map, the only sound she heard was her own footsteps and breathing. There seemed to be no other soul onboard. Passing through the cold corridors, she came to the realization that the path led her around areas of the ship that would not open to her. Other doors led to crew quarters, store rooms, and duty stations, but certain ones would not respond to her. Fear gripped tightly around Mireya's stomach again.

An open door to her left. Mireya entered cautiously, and the interior lights throbbed on, dull from a lack of power. It was a man's room, given the characteristic disheveled state. There were various pictures and commendations on the walls, one man the common thread between them all. Medium build, close-cut dark hair, bright blue eyes. Mireya picked up a picture frame on the floor. She ran her finger over the cracked cover glass. Some twinge of familiarity?

She heard – and felt – a discernable groan from the ship's structure, resonating through the hall outside like a low, gutteral cry of a huge beast. She placed the picture on the desk and decided to keep moving.

The path through the ship ended before a wide set of security doors. She shivered violently for a moment, and set her hand on the scanner plate. The doors parted and emergency lights tried, and failed, to flicker on inside.

She entered the ship's empty command and control room. The doors closed and she was once again cast in darkness. She panicked, turned and flailed for a way to open the door, but nothing responded. She turned and her eyes adjusted to the darkness, revealing a vista of stars beyond the smooth arcing observation window.

And a single light pulsed on the central island station. She approached it and touched the cold hardened glass surface. The face of a man, probably in his mid-30s, appeared. The face from the photograph.

"Hello Mireya," he paused. *Do I know this man?*

"If you're watching this then you've made it out of your pod. You probably don't remember much of anything, but that's a side effect of what we... had to do." Liquid dripped from her wet hair onto the screen. She gently wiped it off with a shaking hand.

The man on the screen sighed. "We don't have a lot of time, so I'll try to explain our actions out of respect for our... history, together. We're freelancers, and patriots to the Federation. We've been doing a lot of work for various agencies within the government for some time now. Lately though, you've become darker, more brutal. I'd say ruthless, but it's much worse than that."

"You see when you get into that pod you become a monster, Mireya. The rest of the crew is more scared than loyal. And when we spotted that Serpentis convoy, we should have called for backup. You *knew* it was far too heavily defended for one ship to take on, but you went in guns blazing. When the second wave of reinforcements came, we decided we didn't want to die for you."

"And so we cut the pod's systems interface with the ship. We thought we could maintain control, but we only had partial navigation and the weapons wouldn't function. The Thorax is quite a ship, but it can only take so much, and when the ventral engine assembly was destroyed, most of the aft section vented into space. There's damage all over the ship, so I had to guide you here around it all."

"We were thought all to be dead, and were adrift in a decaying orbit around a gas giant. The crew... considered pulling you out of the pod. But watching dozens of our friends die in vacuum – well, let's just say that changes how one feels."

"I'm sorry it had to come to this. I don't know what state you're in, mentally, whether you remember anything or not. But we thought you should know why we did what we did. I have to go now, we're about to abandon ship. Part of me is sorry you have to die alone, but I don't think you thought much about the rest of us anyway. Goodbye."

Mireya's head swam, and her eyes fogged over with tears. What kind of person was she? Was she so horrible that these people would leave her to die? The panel blinked. She wiped her eyes with the palms of her hands. "Message two begins," intoned a computerized voice.

The same man appeared, looking somewhat ragged and exhausted. He wiped away drops of sweat from his brow using the sleeve of his uniform.

"The others left seven hours ago. They think I stayed behind to disable the weapons and make sure the scuttle charges armed properly after the ship took that much damage. I just couldn't leave without... trying. I can barely lift my arms. None of the tools onboard can cut through carbonide of that strength, and of course the security locks only register your handprint."

The man looked through the screen, as if right into Mireya's eyes.

"I wanted you to know. To know that I tried to get you out of that thing. I can't help hoping there's something of the woman I knew years ago, inside that pod. I'd hoped I could get you out of there and you would be the person you used to be. My gentle Mireya, who would walk the halls at night with me when everyone else was asleep. You don't remember how we would talk, just you and I. Well I remember... and I miss that. It's probably selfish of me to expect anything like that now, though." *No... wait.*

"But I've stayed as long as I can. The undamaged reactor is cooling now, and I've shut down life support to most of the ship and routed almost all the power left to maintain these command systems. More importantly, I've given everything I can to the pod systems so you have as much time as possible." The man sighed, and stood.

"Goodbye, Mireya. There's so much more I want to say, but there's no time. I... I just wish things could have been different."

The panel flickered out. Mireya sank slowly into a station chair. She looked out of the port window and saw a flash of lightning in the dark. The planet – she must be orbiting low, above the dark side. The flash was *close*.

Mireya curled up in the seat, pondering whether she really was the monster the man described. She didn't think herself capable of controlling a ship, much less acting like a... monster.

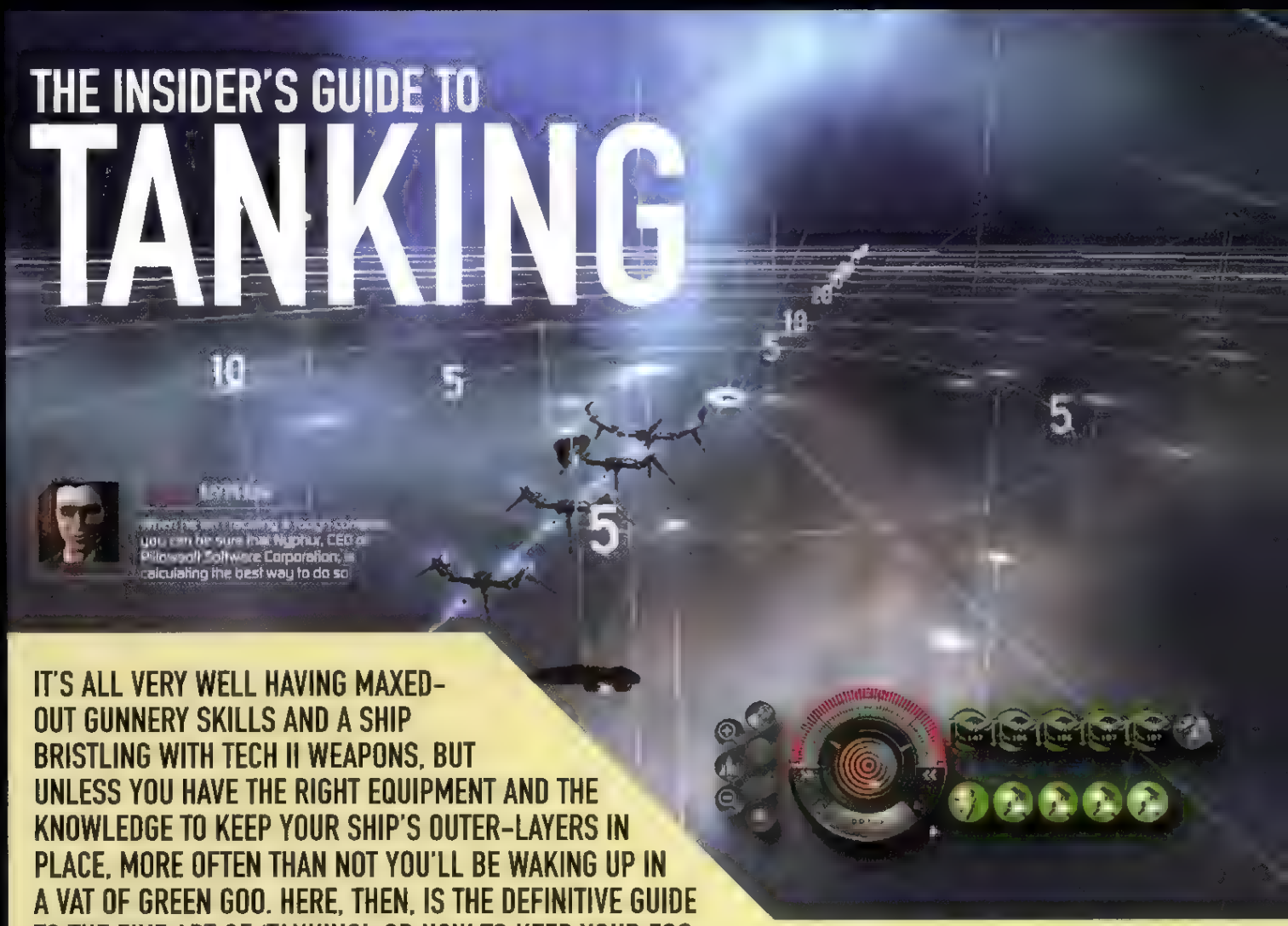
She clutched herself in the dark, sobbing quietly. Eventually she slept, feeling the warmth of the sun, with a gentle breeze blowing through her hair.

And somewhere, on the dark side of a lonely gas giant, a light like a candle was lit, shone briefly, and then was blown out forever.

Was she so horrible that these people would leave her to die?

Creator and curator of Warp Drive Active *(www.winterblink.com/wda), Latin-obsessed Michael Lastucka is also responsible for the ongoing graphical story* Nature Vraie *(www.winterblink.com/env).*

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO TANKING



IT'S ALL VERY WELL HAVING MAXED-OUT GUNNERY SKILLS AND A SHIP BRISTLING WITH TECH II WEAPONS, BUT UNLESS YOU HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT AND THE KNOWLEDGE TO KEEP YOUR SHIP'S OUTER-LAYERS IN PLACE, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT YOU'LL BE WAKING UP IN A VAT OF GREEN GOO. HERE, THEN, IS THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THE FINE ART OF 'TANKING', OR HOW TO KEEP YOUR EGG IN SHAPE WHILE ALL ABOUT YOU PEOPLE ARE LOSING THEIRS

A staple of online gaming, from EverQuest to EVE Online, is the tank. Tanking, to cite a common definition, is 'the act of absorbing damage'. In games as early as EverQuest, players discovered that if one player specialised in taking damage, another in healing him and a third in giving damage, they would together be more effective than a group of three well-rounded characters. In EVE, tanking takes on a mostly solo role but is just as important in an effective ship setup. With the introduction of remote repairers and logistic ships, tanking has certainly taken an important role in combat encounters. Yet even with this level of importance, there are still hundreds of players, probably thousands, who don't understand how to tank effectively or why it's so important.

In combat, whether you're up against NPC pirates or other players, the goal is to destroy the enemy before they destroy you. While dealing high damage is desirable, the ability to outlast your opponent is a powerful one. It doesn't matter how many wrecking hits you can dish out if you can't take them yourself.

A MATTER OF SKILLS

In EVE, tanking commonly takes the form of using a mixture of shield/armour hardeners and a shield booster/armour repairer to mend the damage taken. Anyone can tank their ship, but what does it take to run a superior tank? For starters, there are a number of relevant skills that can give you a decided edge. For both shields and armour, there are skills that increase the total capacity by five per cent per level – Shield Management for shields and Hull Upgrades for armour. At Level 5, that's a 25 per cent increase in your ship's staying power in a fight, a significant bonus that should not be taken lightly. That last level may take a while to train but there are times when we all manage to escape a battle with damage to the hull and realise that the last five per cent really did help. There are also new gang-assist modules and skills that add to resistances and hit points of your gang, along with a plethora of implants that can help.

SHIELD + ARMOUR = CHALK + CHEESE

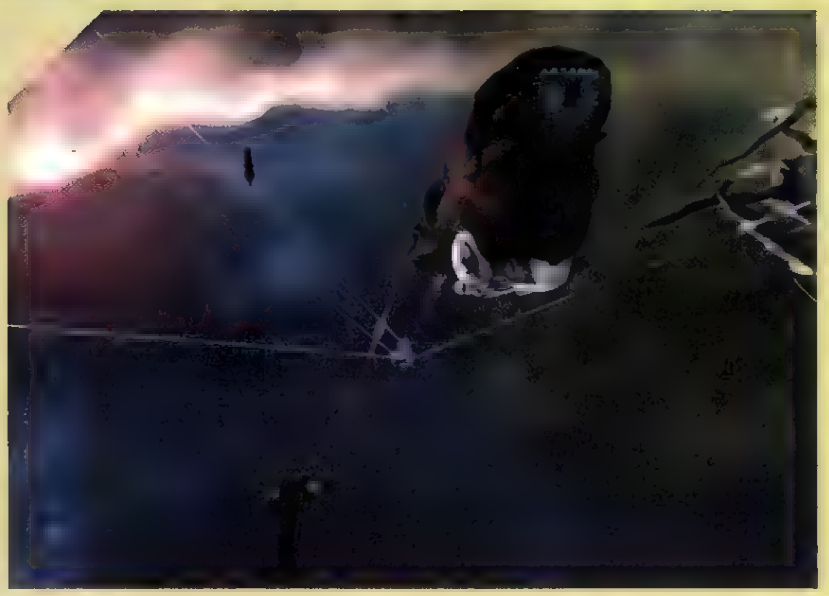
At this point, it has to be noted that shields and armour perform very differently in EVE. While on the surface they both look like simple damage buffers, there are some very distinct differences. Shields have a slow recharge rate, so they will repair themselves over time, while armour must be repaired manually. When the shield is low, damage can leak through into the armour but your hull cannot actually take damage until all of your armour has been depleted. The Tactical Shield Manipulation skill will help prevent damage leaking through the shields, but the best option, of course, is to not let them get that low. Shields also have a Shield Operation Skill to increase recharge rate by five per cent per level and, quite recently, a Shield Compensation Skill was introduced to decrease capacitor usage of shield boosters by two per cent per level. Armour is left with the Repair Systems Skill for a five per cent reduction in armour repairer duration – the effect of which is to increase the repair rate at the expense of more capacitor. Overall, there are more skills for shields than for armour, making shield-tanking a very training-intensive field to gain an advantage in.

PASSIVE TANKING

The primary difference between shields and armour is that shields slowly recharge on their own. There are modules such as the Shield Recharger and Shield Power Relay which will improve your shield recharge rate; Power Diagnostic units will give a small boost. Some players, like *Pottsey*, specialise in using a high shield-recharge rate rather than a shield booster and it can be quite effective on large ships such as Battleships. Of course, shield recharge would be nothing without good resistances, so the key would be to get a good balance between the two. Shields do not recharge uniformly. The less shield you have, the faster it will recharge. This happens until your shield drops below about 32 per cent, at which point it will start to severely decrease in recharge rate. The maximum recharge rate is found at roughly 33 per cent and the number of hitpoints per second that regenerate in that time can be found using this simple formula:

(Shield Capacity/Recharge Time)*2.4

If this looks familiar, you've really been doing your homework. This is the same formula used for Capacitor recharge and it applies the same to shields.



RESISTANCE ISN'T ALL THERE IS TO TANKING, ALTHOUGH IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF A CONVENTIONAL TANK

KITTING OUT YOUR SHIP

There is a general ruleset to follow when deciding how best to fit out your ship for tanking. Anyone can throw on a few hardeners and a repairer, but if you want to get the most out of your ship, that just won't hack it. The first thing to consider is which to go for – armour or shields. The big decider here is the number of low and mid slots available on your ship. As a general rule, if the ship has more low slots, it's an armour tanker since low slots are used for all the armour modules. Conversely, if it has more medium slots than low, it's usually a shield tanker. On the rare occasion that a ship has an equal number of both, it can do either fairly effectively. I'm an armour tanker by nature, since I fly Gallente ships which make good armour tanks, so I'll talk mostly about armour. Those of you who are more interested in shields can use the information in this guide too, but you'll have the added bonus of shield recharge. As a rule, Amarr and Gallente ships make good armour tankers due to their large number of low slots and good armour HP, Caldari ships make good shield tankers thanks to their large number of medium slots and high shield HP and Minmatar ships tend to do well at either.

KNOW THINE ENEMY

Let's pretend we're using our good old friend the Thorax. The Thorax has three mid slots and five low slots, so it's a definite armour tank. The next thing to consider is what enemies you're likely to be fighting. If you're fighting NPCs, such as those found in asteroid belts or on missions, the effectiveness of your tank will be greatly improved by concentrating on increasing your ship's resistance to only the types of damage the NPC ships deal. We're fighting the evil Serpentis corporation today, so a quick check to the table (*Rat Weapon Damage*, below left) shows that they use hybrid guns which deal only thermal and kinetic damage, therefore we need to buff up our kinetic and thermal armour resistance. We can use either the passive armour coatings or the active armour hardeners. Barring the most expensive complex or officer loot, passive hardeners are usually not nearly as effective as the active hardeners, which provide a 50 per cent bonus to your armour's resistance to that damage type. Passive armour coatings, however, do not use any capacitor and are popular on frigates. Note that there may also be new skills coming in to increase the resistance given by passive armour coatings, so they may become a viable option on larger ships.

RESISTANCE ISN'T FUTILE

We have five low slots to work with, remember, and since we're tanking solo we need some way to repair the received damage, so one of those will be taken up by an armour repairer. We're left with four slots to use for hardeners. The instinctive reaction is to put two thermal hardeners and two kinetic hardeners on there, but this may be inefficient. It is important to check not only the types of damage a certain type of gun deals, but also the proportion it deals it in. While the amount of damage dealt by hybrid ammo and their proportions varies from type to type, one thing is consistent – hybrid weapons deal more kinetic damage than thermal. This means kinetic resistance is more important than thermal. Getting the tank right all depends on working out a good balance. While a large resistance may look nice, some resistances get priority over others due to the enemy dealing more of that damage type. With information on the various NPCs, it's possible to determine the proportions in which they deal all of their damage types, then in turn, prioritise *your* resistance bonuses so you have optimal performance from your setup.

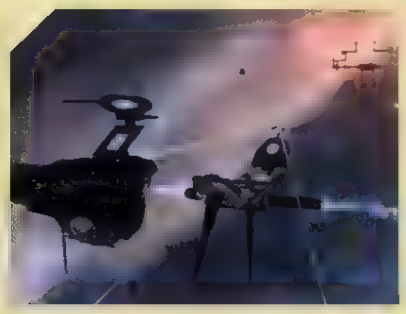
TESTING OUT THE TANK

The only sure-fire way to know if your tank will work is to test it out, which is dangerous. Fortunately, we have a powerful tool at our disposal – maths! If you aren't very mathematically minded and would prefer a black-box system where you plug in some values and get out the results, I have a spreadsheet available online (which I will try to keep updated) at www.eve-tanking.com. The spreadsheet is based on another someone posted on the EVE forums which simply calculated resistances; regrettably I can't find out who originally posted it. I have since modified it extensively to calculate a lot more useful things than just resistances. Understanding the mathematics behind tanking can prove a huge advantage.

RAT WEAPON DAMAGE

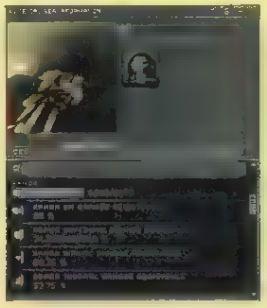
Don't know which resistances to use against which enemies? Here is a short summary of the damage types, shown in order dealt by the NPC pirate factions:

Angel Cartel	–	**Explosive, Kinetic, Thermal and EM**
Blood Raiders	–	**Thermal and EM**
Guristas	–	**Kinetic and Thermal**
Serpentis	–	**Thermal and Kinetic**
Sansha	–	**Thermal and EM**
Rogue Drones	–	**EM, Thermal, Kinetic and Explosive**



THE HARDMOBILE

Here's a picture of the Hardmobile, my faithful complex-tanking Deimos, in action. I'm being remote repaired by a corpmate, *Naliana*, in a Dominix fitted out specially for the job. This picture was taken inside a secret hidden complex – can you guess where it is?



THE SCIENCE BIT

You've read the description of the active hardeners and read that '50 per cent' figure, something which seems to confuse a lot of people. When it says '50 per cent', it doesn't multiply your resistance by 1.5 or add a straight 50 per cent on top. The end resistance is calculated by taking your current resistance away from 100, then multiplying that by Resistance Bonus/100. In essence, a bonus of 50 per cent means it gives you 50 per cent of the difference between your current resistance and 100 per cent. In that way, it's not possible to ever reach 100 per cent to any resistance. Some people learn about this and say that the description is misleading and it hasn't given them 50 per cent extra resistance but, to those more mathematically inclined, it's clear that the damage taken will be halved, so 50 per cent resistance has indeed been added. If you're using multiple hardeners affecting the same resistance, some is lost to the stacking penalty. The aforementioned spreadsheet handily calculates the stacking penalty for you, given the number of modules affecting that resistance

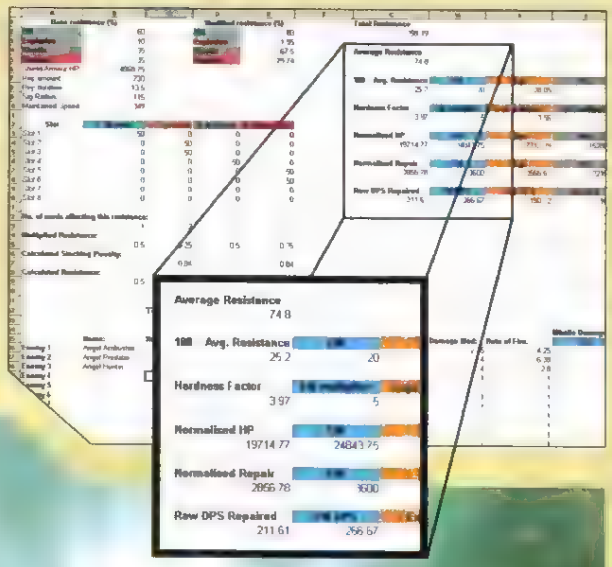
LEARNING THE HARD WAY

Now that you know the maths behind calculating resistance, what's next? Resistance isn't all there is to tanking, although it is undoubtedly the most important part of a conventional tank. Something that surprises me is that I still come across people who load their ship up with armour plates and are convinced that theirs will last longer than any other setup. In an effort to prove them wrong, I simply plugged some numbers into my spreadsheet and quickly came to the conclusion that while more armour plates or shield extenders will increase your armour or shield hit points respectively, the raw damage that armour can absorb ends up lower than it would using a mix of plates/extenders and hardeners. Furthermore, the rate at which they repair the raw incoming damage is decreased significantly with the armour plates compared to that of the hardeners. In essence, armour plates may add more armour, but hardeners will improve what you've already got, which tends to be more beneficial. I will say this time and time again – if you want a successful tank, resistances are the key.

THE HARDNESS FACTOR™

I designed a few additions to help rate the effectiveness of a tank. The most important thing to know is the idea of the 'Hardness Factor'. The Hardness Factor is an idea I came up with for rating my armour against raw damage and it's proven useful. It's calculated by the equation 100/(100-resistance) and

This spreadsheet, developed by author Nyphur, is available for all at www.eve-tanking.com



Armour plates may add more armour, but hardeners will improve what you've already got

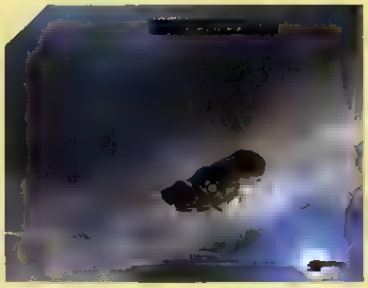
the purpose of it is to give a rating to exactly how 'hard' your armour is, in terms of resistances. Double the factor means your tank is doubly effective to that resistance.

What can this 'Hardness Factor' be used for? A useful little tool for estimating the effectiveness of a tank, it can be multiplied by your armour HP to give the amount of raw damage you can take before it fails, or it can be multiplied by your repairer's repair amount to give the total of raw damage one repairer cycle equates to. The spreadsheet uses this to calculate a number of things you might find helpful, including the raw damage per second that you can take, and repair successfully.

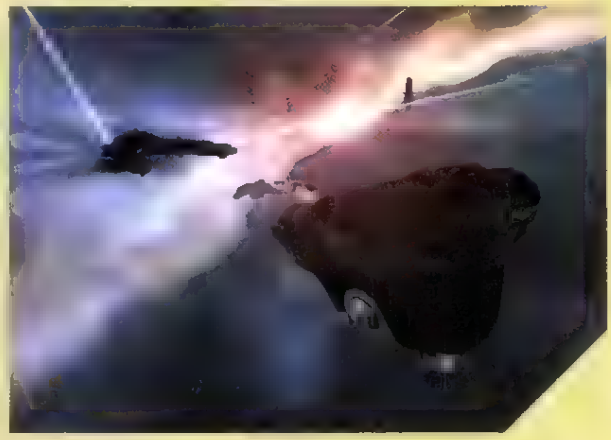
PUSHING THE LIMITS

It's true that there is a limit to the amount of resistance attainable on a single ship and a limit to the repair amount you can achieve. That's why, in order to push the absolute limits of tanking, we need to run a remote tank. A remote tank is one where most or all of the repairing is outsourced to another ship, usually a Battleship or a Logistics Cruiser. In order to push the limits, we need to gain the highest resistances possible and have someone else do the repairing. I am a complex-tanker, which means I tank the entire fleets of NPCs found in deadspace complexes. As you can imagine, taking on that many enemies at once puts me in the position of needing to really push the boundaries of tanking. The average person would jump right in and say a Battleship is the ship for the job, perhaps the mighty Apocalypse with its seven low slots, but the average person would be wrong. The ship for the job (at the moment) is the HAC, the Tech II variant of the cruiser due to its high resistances.

YOU CAN HAVE THE BEST REPAIRER OUT THERE BUT, IF THE ENEMY DEALS ENOUGH DAMAGE TO YOU BEFORE IT KICKS IN, YOU CAN BE DESTROYED



The remote tank in action



SHAMELESS PLUG #23

This is where the spreadsheet really takes off. You can enter a list of enemies by name and how many of each of that type of enemy are in the complex. Not only will it calculate the proportions of the damage types they fire but it will tell you the overall average resistance you'll have against the entire fleet as a single value. Adjust the hardeners to see what gives the largest final resistance and your tank will be the most effective it can be against the complex. A handy tool, eh?

But it doesn't stop there! If you can list every enemy that will be attacking you at once, you can plug those ships alone into the spreadsheet and it will tell you, on average, how much damage the entire fleet will deal per second to you and how much you're repairing, then it will compare the two and spit out a percentage tankability. Above 100 per cent means the tank will theoretically hold indefinitely, but it's possible to run a tank with a much lower percentage than 100, *if* you can take the enemies out fast enough *or* keep them out of optimal range. Keep in mind that the damage can fluctuate, so if you're planning to be tanking it for a long time, try to keep it above 100 per cent. If you plan to run the tank at under 100 per cent, it will even predict how long it will hold against that much damage.

BURST DAMAGE

A problem I'd like to touch on for a moment, for which I had to lose two Ishtars to fully explore, is the burst damage problem. Burst damage is something that plagues all tanking setups, and yet many players are entirely unaware of it. Burst damage is the amount of damage your enemy can deal to you before you can repair it (between cycles of your armour repairer or shield booster). You can have the best repairer out there but, if the enemy deals enough damage to you before it kicks in, you can be destroyed. I mathematically tested which would be the better tank, the Ishtar or the Deimos. After crunching some numbers, I concluded that the Ishtar would make a better solo tank because it could run two repairers at once, raising the raw damage per second repaired above that of the Deimos. However, in practice, it tended to die on a whim. Two Ishtars and a little thinking later, I realised that while the raw damage per second repaired was mathematically higher, the lower armour resistances meant that I couldn't take the punch when the enemy got a few lucky hits in. I concluded that if the number of hit points was too low, the burst damage from running a tank at under 100 per cent tankability could destroy your ship. With an armour plate in place, that ceases to be a problem. For a good tank, it's important to have not just high resistances but enough hit points to make use of them.

SPACE AND TIME

Another of the intricacies of tanking is module activation timing. When using multiple repairers or remote repairers, it is incredibly

WACKY TANKS

Although the resistance-and-repairer setup is the common form of the tank, there are other forms it can take. They may not qualify as 'tanks' in the conventional sense, but they certainly do the same job.

Outranging the opponent: if you're outside the enemy's firing range, you don't take any damage.
ECM Tank: target jammers can be a part of a good tank – by successfully jamming the enemy, they can't inflict any damage.
Speed: small frigates often orbit the enemy so fast that their turrets cannot hit and missiles deal pathetic damage.
High Damage Setup: as a corpmate of mine always says, one sure-fire way of removing damage is to remove what's causing it. The faster you remove the enemy from the battlefield, the less damage you have to take and the less time your tank has to last.

This list is far from comprehensive.
More detail can be found at www.eve-tanking.com

MUST-HAVE MODULES

Nyphur's top five must-have modules for tanking:

Hardeners.
Whether shield or armour, resistances are always important.
Tech II/named armour repairer/ shield booster
Tech I just doesn't cut it.
Cap recharger II
The edge these give me running my repairer is worth the 12mil price tag.
1600mm Rolled Tungsten Armour Plate
6000 armour on a Deimos? Yes please.
Damage Control II
These have suddenly become a whole lot more useful.

important to evenly space apart the repairer activation. If you're off by a second or two, it means there will be a period of extended time between repairs in which you'll take more damage than normal and a period of reduced time between repairs, in which you'll repair more than you probably need and waste resources. Spacing the module activation out is what makes the difference between smooth repairing and jerky, unreliable repairing.

AGAINST THE LIVING

Arguably, the most important aspect of EVE is the player versus player conflict. I have left this to the end for a very good reason. NPCs are simple and easy to predict (my spreadsheet should convince you of that, if nothing else), but players are much more difficult to predict. They vary in tactics, ship-fittings, skills and experience. Unless you have good intelligence about the enemy fleet's spec, it isn't going to be easy to fit a good counter to their ship setups and known tactics. Tanking, therefore, tends not to have a substantial role in PvP.

Sometimes, in a PvP situation, players will opt for a full 'gank' setup – one which is entirely devoted to damage output. In practice, this doesn't hold up well in small engagements. The preferred choice is to find a balance between gank and tank – a point where you'll deal decent damage per second but stay alive long enough to deal it for a long time. Too little damage and you won't be able to break your opponent's tank. Too much damage sacrifices your own tank and you won't last very long at all. Thanks to the stacking penalty on tracking computers, ballistic control units and damage mods, it's quite efficient to go 50:50 with the tank/gank ratio. The popular choice seems to be to fit a repairer, some hardeners to cover your armour's weak spots and round off the resistances (because you never know what you'll come up against) and the rest of your slots are devoted to pure damage. One thing I know for certain is that in PvP, there's no such thing as a dedicated tank. In the future, I foresee logistics ships and advanced tank tactics implemented in PvP, not by CCP, but by organised and clever players who find a way to make it work.

THE ART OF PLANNING AHEAD

I hope this article has cleared up a lot of the myths and confusions surrounding tanking and has provided you with the tools you need to fit your ship out properly. I've seen far too many people go off to fight the Blood Raider Covenant with kinetic hardeners and far too many people using low-end passive hardeners on Battleships. As CCP releases new specialist ships and changes the skill bonuses and stats of the old vessels to fit with its grand vision, tanking will evolve alongside it.

Tanking is a constantly evolving aspect of combat, one that is as much an art as it is a science. With that in mind, the number one piece of advice I can give you is plan ahead. Always, always plan ahead.

For more information on tanking, and for updates on the tanking spreadsheet, please visit www.eve-tanking.com.

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO TRADING

PART 2

LAST ISSUE WE TAUGHT YOU THE BASICS OF TRADING IN SECURE 'EMPIRE' SPACE. IF YOU FOLLOWED THE ADVICE, YOU SHOULD BY NOW HAVE A DECENT AMOUNT OF SKILLPOINTS, A CAPABLE INDUSTRIAL SHIP AND A WALLET BURSTING WITH CASH. NOW IT'S TIME TO JOIN THE BIG LEAGUE, WHERE FORTUNES CAN BE ACQUIRED WITHOUT EVER LEAVING THE SAFETY OF YOUR HOME STATION

TEXT: KAAII

KAAII wasn't always a cut-throat businesswoman. Back in her dim and distant past, Kaaii was something of a backpacker; mapping out frontier systems and mining just enough to pay the bills. How times have changed...

While our focus so far has been towards the NPC trade goods market, it's time to put the skills you've been learning and the experience you've acquired to good use. We'll start by looking at trading in items more directly useful to the common pod pilot.

As pilots delve deeper into uncharted or unsafe areas, wars are fought and ships and modules are lost, there is a huge market for modules as players strive to replace them. Fighters with more ISK than time will pay large sums of money to have spare items and ships available near their base of operations. This gives them more time to do what they do – fight for a living – while you, as the wise trader, provide the logistics for their operations abroad. Remember, though, the further you go out from the core, the more dangerous (and profitable) these trades become.

Of course, you should not overlook other commodities that are driven by player-demand; like the NPC trade goods market, the POS (player-owned structure) fuel supply market has a high volume turnover with static purchase and sell locations that the seasoned trader can capitalize on. The POS fuel market consists of a form of ice, containing heavy water, liquid ozone, strontium clathrates with the additional NPC items; enriched uranium robotics, mechanical parts, coolant, and oxygen. All POS towers use these items. The only difference between the racial towers is that they use one of the four types of isotopes. These are: nitrogen isotopes (Caldari), helium isotopes (Amarr), oxygen isotopes (Gallente) and hydrogen isotopes (Minmatar).

RED MOON HAS RISEN

There are more than a few small POS operations out there running a skeleton crew in 0.3 sec border systems, sometimes under the care of a single POS manager – operations which tend to buy rather than supply their own fuel. As they were prior to Red Moon's release, moon mining remains limited to 0.3 systems and below, but the re-working of the manufacturing process means that factory and research starbase structures can be built in up to 0.7 security status systems. The upshot of this (and this is theory as it's still early days) is that not only will demand for base minerals increase thanks to the insane resource requirements demanded by Capital Ship manufacture, but the number of deep space POS operations will increase alongside it. In short, greater demand for ice products and the trade goods mentioned, to the glee of the watchful trader.

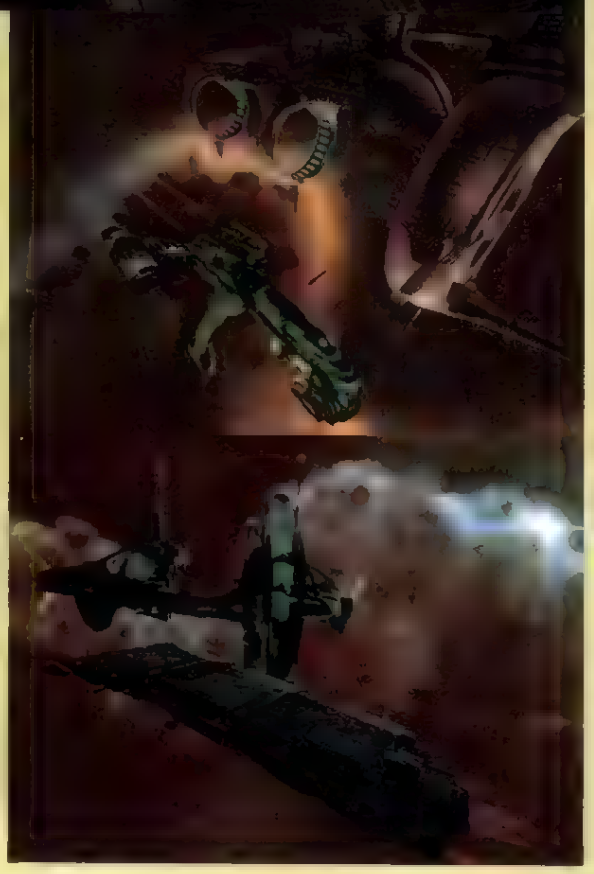
Some systems have very established production facilities, which depend on having huge quantities of minerals present for day-to-day operations. Buying low-end materials from systems with large numbers of sell orders indicates a lot of competition from players mining and selling these products and can consequently provide a trader with a good source of cheap(er) minerals. From here you can haul these into established manufacturing systems, ones with large corps producing ships, modules and ammunition, for a tidy profit margin. These areas generally have specific points in the universe. And again, with manufacturing POS operations springing up, the demand for ore can only increase. It may be too early to declare a gold rush for minerals, but it's a market that should not be ignored, especially at this point in time.

BLACK MARKET TRADING

There are unquestionably huge sums of money to be made at trading in black market goods. The downside is the inherent risk tied to such activity. The skills needed for this type of trading are varied, with a single skill (Black Market Trading - each level of which reduces the chance of contraband detection by 10 per cent), only being available at character creation. So, while you may be successful if the trip spans just a couple of systems, without a character specifically made for smuggling you will be hard pressed to survive. Most regions have NPC customs officers watching the gates; they will scan your cargo more often than not. Depending on your standings, skills and cargo, you may be stopped, searched, fined and your illicit substances confiscated. Worse, if you don't haul ass, your ship may be destroyed by Concord and customs.

Above: freighters haven't quite killed trade, but they've certainly changed it. Good traders will adapt

Right: when using couriers to handle your freight, don't assume everyone is flying around in an Iteron V



There are a few myths that need to be dispelled here. First, that you can put a passworded secure container in your hold with the contraband inside and jump free and clear; this is false Second, insta-jumps will not save you. Anyone who has ever been targeted by Concord knows that the lock times these guys have are just short of incredible, so while you may succeed once or twice, it's luck not skill that'll save you. Sooner or later you are going to get caught and the added consequences are that you can loose faction standings, making your presence in high-security empire space less than secure. For this reason, I personally choose not to trade black market items. I know of many people that do, and make a tidy sum by avoiding systems where cargo is deemed illegal (check your Autopilot settings via the F10 Map Screen). If you have the financial resources to soak up the fines you'll earn in the early stages, knock yourselves out.

USING ESCROW

The Escrow Screen option (available in stations that offer missions) can be a gainful tool for the clever trader. As it stands now it is only used for sell options, but it's one worth explaining. Basically, escrow is putting something up for sale without using the standard market option.

In the beginning, escrow was supposed to be used for items that could not be sold on the market (screen) because they were not included in the market database, such as 'named' modules and specialty equipment. Then people figured out that it offered a way to avoid paying taxes, hence a huge number of 'market items' appearing on escrow for sale.

One of the items on CCP's 'to-do' list is an extensive overhaul of the escrow scheme. As you might have already figured out, the escrow option charges you a flat rate for activity, regardless of the cost of the item(s) you are selling, and there is no escrow 'fee' or transaction tax. In short, you can circumvent paying these costs by selling items on escrow instead of the market. You can also have hundreds of sells active with no need for the skills associated with order limits. This is not very fair to those who have trained up the proper skills to mitigate these costs, but thankfully CCP has identified this and is working on rectifying the situation. The new 'contract' system is scheduled as a feature for next year's 'Kali' expansion.

There will come a day when you'll tire of hauling goods around. When you do, put your feet up, sit back in your home station and let others do all the hauling for you

THERE'S ESCROW, AND THERE'S ESCROW

The word escrow is used extensively in EVE, but it has two very distinct meanings, each with important differences. There is the Escrow Screen (covered in the previous section, overleaf), meaning a tool for entering an item (or items) for sale or transfer to someone specific (or not). *But* the term 'escrow' also denotes an amount of ISK pledged when putting up a buy order on the Market Screen. When you place an order that is not an instant buy, you need to secure the transaction by pledging the total amount of the purchase, plus the fees associated with the transaction (escrow tax, transaction tax) from your wallet. This amount is deducted immediately when you enter the buy order. It's an 'I want to buy 50,000 widgets from someone at this price, here's the money for it in advance' order. When your buy order is fulfiled it is purchased with these escrowed funds. Note, however, that if you enter a buy order like this and you either don't get the items you wanted at the price you wanted *or* you cancel the order, you will get these funds transferred back into your wallet minus the escrow fee. This is a very important point. The Market Screen charges you to use its service regardless of whether your buy goes though or not. The Margin Trading skill will reduce the amount you have to pay, but you may have to wait some time for this escrow amount to show up back in your wallet.

SHIPLESS TRADING

Pretty soon you will realize that flying back and forth in a slow industrial is... well, sometimes boring. But the money is good, right? Well there are ways and means of keeping profits high that are a little more taxing in the gray matter than watching stars scoot by. To reach this stage of your trading career, you need to think of yourself as more of a trade manager running a large depot, than just being simple truck driver.

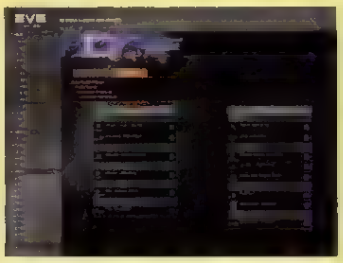
Assuming you have done your homework and prospected with some success, you should have found a few profitable spots. You should have taken note, too, of the volume of the commodity per unit. You know the lowest sell and highest buy of the NPC stations in the region. Additionally, you'll have trained up your Wholesale skill, raising your limit of active orders, and your Marketing and Margin Trading skills for remote selling and reducing market escrow amounts (see above), along

PRETTY SOON YOU WILL REALIZE THAT FLYING BACK AND

OUTSIDER TRADING

Trafficking common NPC trade goods across the core systems in Empire space is one of the most competitive, demanding and frustrating ways to earn a wage. A huge percentage of the general population live in or around the main Empire trade hubs, and because of this, competition is intense. The common trader realizes this and moves into the less populated systems, hoping to capitalize on the lack of traffic. But the wise trader will quickly know exactly where to go... and why.

One of the first things a smart trader does is research (yes, we covered this in Part 1, but it's an important point that can't be stressed enough). So where does one find the information? Well, the EVE Online website has a little-known but priceless source of information called the Item Database (www.eve-online.com/itemdatabase/tradegoods). This is your new best friend!



Within you will find the pertinent statistics on all the in-game tradegoods, all neatly sub-divided into categories. Lets look at consumer electronics (predictably enough, found among Consumer Products). Notice that there are two tabs at the top there – one for the general statistic info, and the other, 'NPC market', which shows which NPC corporations buy and sell this commodity.

The first on the Buying list for Consumer Electronics is Amarr Trade Registry. Clicking on the familiar blue info icon next to the name will link you to the entire corporation infrastructure, to the left of which you should see the 'Station Map' icon, which will show you the general location of every station owned by the corporation.

with any other number of useful skills, like Procurement and Broker Relations.

The trick with shipless, or remote, trading is to set the quantity of your buy orders into manageable amounts. This has repercussions when it comes to keeping your profile low (which we'll explain in a future issue), but the main reason for this is that you are going to hire people to make you money. In effect, they will do all the donkey work. Your target pilots are the up and coming couriers and haulers, who you must assume will not always have the largest capacity ships. You want to be aware of this when setting the quantity, as at the moment there is no facility for remote stacking or unstacking of items in your hangar. You certainly don't want to have to fly eight jumps just to split a stack of 10,000 construction blocks, and by ensuring you have manageable quantities of goods for transport you won't have to. Figure out manageable amounts of items according to their volume. Make them small and you will increase your chances of a timely delivery.

Using the map browser and the world map control panel you can quickly locate regional border systems

BORDER PATROL

The trader who relies solely on the in-game Market Screen will always be at a disadvantage as it's limited to regional market data. You can be on the boundary system in a region and one jump away could be a seller with hundreds of items you want – the Market Screen will not show this. There are traders who make millions working regional border zones with little or no effort at all. Locating your base of operations at the apex of several border regions can be a lucrative and effortless way of amassing capital.

SPREAD YOUR BETS

If you're in tune with the markets and know what the rock bottom and ceiling prices are, you'll also know that the market fluctuates between these prices and rarely ever reach rock bottom or sky high. By layering your buy orders at the right prices, you ensure that you can capitalize at just the right level. The point is that, rather than sitting and waiting for the absolute best price, at least your money is working for you rather than sitting idle. And the better you know your market area, the better you will be at maximizing your profit to cover the fluctuations in the marketplace.

The way to do this is to enter your station, system or regional buy orders for the items you are planning to make a killing on. The first order should be for the rock bottom price on the buy. Now, do it again with a 5-10 per cent increase, and again for another 5-10 per cent. What you are doing is layering the buy orders. As the market swings, your buy orders fire and you start to fill your hangar with stacks of items. Each stack is a transaction so make a note of what it was bought at in your wallet. When the market moves, the orders fire on 'arrival' of the new price, not in 'passing' prices. For example, if you have buys for something at, say, 5 10 and 15 ISK and the market is currently at 22 ISK, when the market swings low, lets say to 9.5, all your orders above 9.5 will fire, but the order for 5 ISK will remain in place. As far as I can tell, the 10 ISK buy will fire before the 15 ISK order. I tend to set my buys for fewer items at the higher prices, in the hope it drops lower than my next buy. The downside of layered buy orders is that by increasing the number this will cut away at the profit margin, since prices rise with each order fulfiled, but you should be able to easily absorb some of the loss if the items in question offer a high profit return.

HIRE SOME TRUCKERS

Since you've invested your time (and skillpoints) in studying the marketplace and being able to interact remotely with it, you'd be wise to pay others to get your goods to their destination. This where the Courier Screen comes in useful (as with Escrow, it comes under Missions). Figure out a reward that is acceptable to your profit margin and don't forget to make the collateral setting both to cover your ⊖

FORTH IN A SLOW INDUSTRIAL IS... WELL, SOMETIMES BORING. BUT THE MONEY IS GOOD, RIGHT?


You can go in-game to find the precise locations of these stations by using the 'People & Places' search function on your Neocon ('show info' then 'show on map') which gives you green dots in every system in which the corporation has a presence.


To find a supplier, the procedure is the same; go back to 'Consumer Electronics', click the 'NPC Market' and you'll see which corporations produce these items. At the top of the list we find Noble Appliances, also an Amarr corp. Simply by bouncing between Amarr Trade Registry, and Noble Appliances on your map you can get a pretty good visual indication of how far apart the market is, and can judge if the route is a worthwhile one.


Now it's time to jump in a shuttle and scout the area more thoroughly. Make at note of the general market throughout all the regions you pass through. What you want to especially look for are regions that sell a lot of some type of commodity (from multiple stations) and have no NPC buy orders. You can tell an NPC buy as the volume stays constant, only the prices change.

purchase and make it affordable to the courier. Setting these up is pretty straightforward; just enter the Mission Screen, find the stack you want to ship, set your collateral and reward, and the destination. It may take some time to build up stock at the target (buyer) station, so you must be prepared to tie up these funds for a bit, sometimes a while. Once you start to accumulate stock at the station, you can set sell orders, again using the tiered-layering system described above for the buys, the reasoning being that if the market spikes just a little, you don't want to dump a huge sell at the lower-tier sell price, but rather at the top of the buy. There's more profit the more you sell at the high price, obviously. If you have 'purchasing power' you can do this all day long; refreshing buys, setting couriers and tweaking sells. To stay on top of things you should do all three. With practice you can get the time spent doing this down, leaving time for more prospecting, or something entirely different.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

Chances are, by following the advice above you will enjoy great periods of wealth. This will depend primarily on your knowledge of the markets. I stress this again because it cannot be stressed enough: to join the exclusive billionaires' club (there are a few who can rake in this much in a single day), you have to study the markets constantly. It's an aspect of trading that cannot be taught, you simply have to make the effort. Do so and the rewards will be immense.

SINCE YOU'VE INVESTED YOUR TIME IN STUDYING THE MARKETPLACE AND BEING ABLE TO INTERACT REMOTELY WITH IT, YOU'D BE WISE TO PAY OTHERS TO GET YOUR GOODS TO THEIR DESTINATION

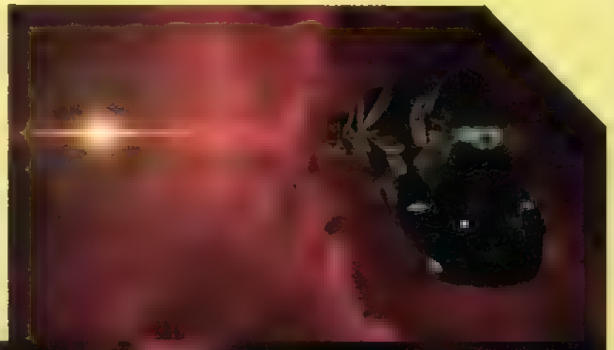
However, your ability to turn over a sustained profit also depends on other players. The profit they make is usually acquired at your (or others') expense, so what can you do to make sure your routes stay yours? And what can you do if you find another trader poaching your routes? The short answer is that there are many methods at your disposal to remain hidden on others' territory, to seek out trade poachers and to make sure that they never bother you again. If you thought trading was a 'carebear' activity, think again. In EVE, money talks and, in a heated exchange between traders, only the common tongue of heavy ordinance flying across the heavens hastens resolution. Trading can get very messy, but we'll have to go into the cleansing process another day.

TRADE SKILLS EXPLAINED

The various Trade skills can be neatly subdivided into three types. The simplest are the four 'Market Order' skills that increase the number of active buy/sell orders you can create (Trade, Retail, Wholesale and Tycoon). The 'Money' skills effectively decrease the costs of trading; Accounting reduces transaction tax; Broker Relations basically reduces the broker's fee, which is based on the value of the sale goods; Margin Trading reduces the escrow amount – essentially meaning you pay less up front, thereby freeing up cash until the buy is fulfiled; finally, Day Trading allows you to modify market orders, meaning you don't have to cancel and then create new orders and incur another hit of transaction tax charge (since tax is non-refundable if a market order is cancelled).

Finally we have 'Order Manipulation' skills. These include Marketing (which allows you to sell goods you have in other stations in the same region), Procurement (place remote buy orders in stations in the same region) and Visibility, which allows other players to see your sell orders in relation to their distance from where the sell order was placed. It's a misnomer that all sell orders are visible across a region. If you have no Trade skills and you want to sell a shuttle you've just repackaged, someone has to actually dock in the station to see the shuttle for sale.

If you were to max out all the 'Market Order' skills, you could place 300 buy or sell orders. In conjunction with high levels attained in the 'Order Manipulation' skills, you could buy and sell goods all day without ever having to leave a station, so long as you can hire enough couriers to ferry the goods to where they need to go.



Vast amounts of minerals are required to build a single titan, and whilst corp miners will be able to source their own minerals, traders will usually provide the shortfall

HUN
CORPORATION

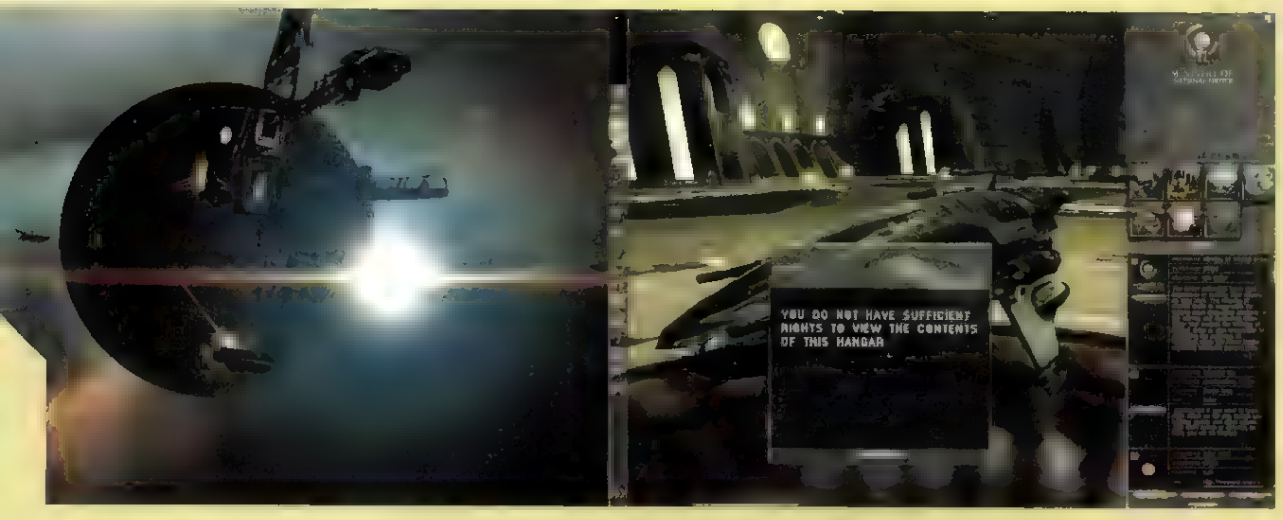
... only the end is sure.

LOOKING FOR THAT SPECIAL GROUP OF PEOPLE TO WORK WITH? WANT TO RECRUIT THE CREAM OF THE EVE COMMUNITY TO YOUR CORPORATION WHILST KEEPING OUT THE RIFF-RAFF? LOOK NO FURTHER THAN OUR GUIDE TO THE ART OF FRESH-MEAT RESOURCING. IT'S A BIT LIKE DATING, ONLY WITHOUT THE GUILT... OR THE DATING FOR THAT MATTER

LAIRD

For two years Laird was the one who did all the hiring and firing for one of EVE's most respected and toughest-to-join corps, Hadean Drive Yards. When it comes to application, he has form.

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO RECRUITING



Far left: the EVE universe can be a dark and hostile place, with sudden, fiery death lurking round the next planet

Left: new cadets should only have access to the basic, low-cost equipment

Of all the roles in EVE, that of Human Resource Officer (HRO) has to be the most challenging. These sociable individuals are responsible for who gets in and who stays out of the corporation. They are the first line of defence against any potential thieves or spies but, against this, they must balance (or more often juggle) the responsibility of recruiting and maintaining suitable numbers into the corp. It is not the most popular (or the most well-paid) job in the EVE universe and a lot of people tend to avoid it (or leave it to the busy CEOs to sort out), but if at all possible it pays to have someone responsible for the intake of new pilots. By following a set of guidelines, the process can result in a smooth and stress-free life for all the members of your happy fleet.

One of the biggest problems? There is a huge number of corporations currently trading in the EVE universe. This means that the demand for both new and experienced pilots, especially capsule-qualified ones, is high to say the least. So how does one go about attracting attention?

Well for starters, the Communications Relay Commission (CRC) has thoughtfully provided us a Corporation & Alliance Recruitment Center (http://myeve.eve-online.com/ingameboard.asp). This is by far the best place to start advertising yourself, whether as an employer or employee. It's also a popular method of recruitment (5899 topics at time of going to press, almost all vying for your attention), so you need to make sure your message is heard loud and clear.

BOARD MEMBERS

What to say? Well for starters, a brief summary of the corporation is always good. People like to know what your corp is about and what your core activities are. As for the rest of the post, you should cover ground such as why you are recruiting, what type of player you are planning to recruit and what criteria they have to meet to be eligible for entry into the corp. Just read what other corps have posted – you'll soon be able to gauge which are the good recruitment posts.

In terms of entry criteria, it's good to put some kind of filter in place just to cut down the huge number of applications or contacts that you may get. Back when I was in Hadean Drive Yards, we insisted that a pilot had to have at least 30 days' flying experience before they would be considered, and that they had to be more than a certain age in real life. This cut down hugely on the number of impulse applications; it also meant that the sort of individuals who would apply were the kind of people most likely to work well within the corp.

CASTING A WIDER NET

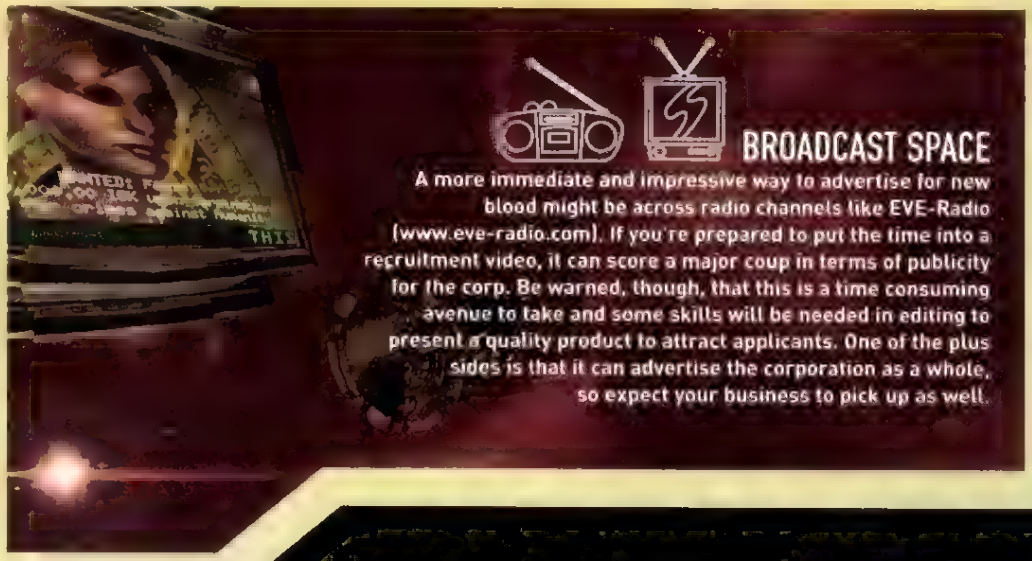
CRC-approved channels are not the only method of advertising your corp. There's a busy in-game chat channel listed under 'Corporate' in your 'Channels & Mailing Lists', available via your Neocon.

There are other avenues too (see *Broadcast Space*, below), but the most time-efficient method of recruitment is to post across the forums and to keep your recruitment message updated (constructive feedback from old employees is also a bonus). Returning soon, apparently, is EVE-I (www.eve-i.com) that had a healthy recruitment message board. The corp/alliance website facilities mooted for EVE-I usurper EVEnews (www.evenews.com) could also prove an invaluable and attractive tool.

If you are actively recruiting, it is an extremely good idea to include any Internet presence you might have. Undoubtedly, the quality of HDY's website, having been voted as one of the best out-of-game corp websites on numerous occasions, had a positive effect on recruitment and business. (And if I may slip on my PR hat for second, www.phoenix-labs.net isn't too shabby either!) My point is, that if you can create a distinctive image for your corp, either through your in-game actions or via the usual communication methods, you will be that much more successful in attracting the right people.

FILLING IN FORMS

As for the application process itself, this can be done either in-game, via a website, or even by use of the specific contact channels that pilots can send their contact info to (email, IRC, in-game private conversation etc). A system I favour myself is the use of the website application, as it means a form can be tailor-made to suit and can go into far greater detail than an in-game application. Details that can be asked on the forum are name, length of time playing EVE, age, what time zone they are in (very important for getting pilots who are going to be on at the same time as everybody else) and their trade in EVE.



BROADCAST SPACE

A more immediate and impressive way to advertise for new blood might be across radio channels like EVE-Radio (www.eve-radio.com). If you're prepared to put the time into a recruitment video, it can score a major coup in terms of publicity for the corp. Be warned, though, that this is a time consuming avenue to take and some skills will be needed in editing to present a quality product to attract applicants. One of the plus sides is that it can advertise the corporation as a whole, so expect your business to pick up as well.

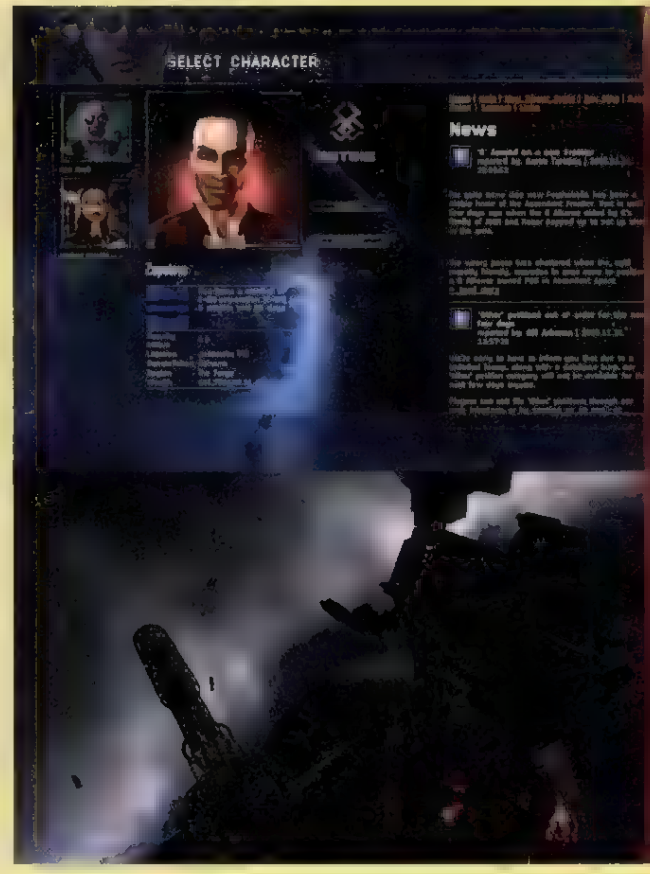
Many corporations have a small text box in which applicants are invited to tell something of themselves and why they wish to join. Always make sure you include a section for contact details such as email, Instant Messenger contact etc. Applicants can then hit the submit button and the application is held in the system on the website, from where one of your HRO staff can review it.

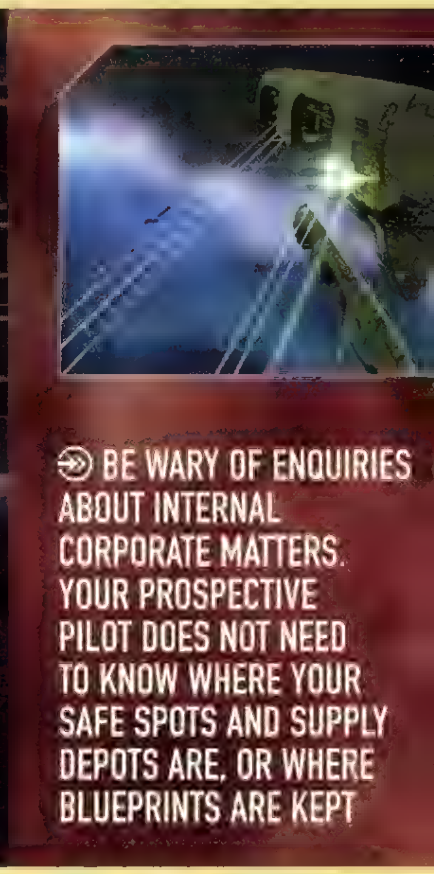
RSVP

After sending out a standard response to all the applicants, it's time to pick whom to accept and reject. If the form has only been partially filled in or they have sent only very basic details they might not be fully interested in joining. This is also the time to look up the applicant's character in-game. To do this click on the 'People & Places' button on your Neocon, make sure the drop down search box is set to 'Character' and type in the name. Be sure to use the correct spelling as it's easy to confuse a capital 'O' with a zero in the EVE font (and some people will use this to their advantage). Once you have the name on screen right-click and select 'Show Info'; this will bring up all their publicly available details. Have a look at their employment history and standings, and check out all the corps listed. If a character has a history of moving between multiple corps in a short time period this should send up warning flags. Also use this opportunity to contact the CEO or HRO staff of their previous corps for references as it can provide a valuable insight into what kind of person they are.

Once you have reviewed their application you can then decide either to contact them to arrange a suitable interview time or to thank them for their time. As for the rejected applicant, you do not necessarily have to give them the reason for rejection, but it is considered reasonable to do so.

One thing that you must never do is ignore a rejected application. It costs nothing to be polite and courteous, and you can garner a bad reputation as a recruiter if you leave people in limbo.





Top: the Character login screen is a common requirement for recruiters. Its use is debatable, as a spy will likely have a 'pre-prepared' version to get HROs off the scent

THE INTERROG... ER, INTERVIEW

The interview (usually conducted through in-game chat, Internet Relay Chat, Instant Messenger – or even using TeamSpeak) is where we separate the quality pilots from the long-limbed roes. It is during this stage that a recruiter will get a 'feel' for the individual and whether or not they are going to fit in. There are no hard and fast rules dictating how long this process should take, but it is not a step that should be avoided – to do so is inviting trouble your way.

Firstly, start things off by thanking them for attending. Believe me, it's a blessing when an applicant turns up on time! Ask a little bit about the person behind the character, what games they play, what they do for a living. I find from experience that people who come from similar backgrounds are the ones most likely to fit into the corp's way of doing things. They will probably add to the general camaraderie of the corp if you all have RL interests in common.

Now it comes to asking about their EVE experiences. If they haven't already said, find out how long they have been playing, and how regularly – as we all know, there is little substitute for time spent in game. Other areas to cover include previous roles in different corps, main 'career' in EVE, experience in PvP combat, mission running, manufacturing etc.

MAKE OR BREAK

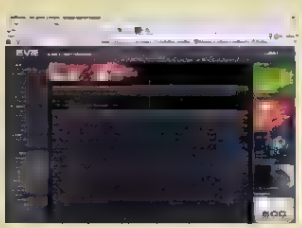
Now it comes to the killer question – why do they want to join your corp? I have found, in the bulk of the interviews I've done over the past couple of years, that this is make or break point for the applicant. This is when you'll establish if they know what they've let themselves in for and how much they know about the organisation they want to join (assuming they have access to info about your corp). It's important to find out what they know about your corporate structure, it's aims and politics; this is especially important if your corporation is part of an alliance. Gauge their responses to a few hypothetical scenarios. If yours is an industry-based corporation and the applicant pilot is more combat-minded, then your organisation is not going to be the home in which he will ever be really happy.

The end of the interview is a good time to invite the candidate to ask questions of their own. Be wary of enquiries about internal corporate matters. Your prospective pilot does not need to know where your safe spots and supply depots are, or where blueprints are kept, but if you are active in a particular region, it pays to be vaguely helpful.

At this point I would usually let the pilot stew for a few minutes whilst I read over the conversation. I would always save a log of the interview for future reference, should it ever be needed, but I prefer to give a candidate a decision ASAP, rather than making them wait. You may like to forward the chat log to others and vote on whether or not the pilot should be accepted. Either way, you should soon have one or two new recruits to add to the roster.

HEADHUNTING

If you read the forums regularly you'll get a feel for the characters that populate EVE's word-ridden other domain. Sometimes you can get to know a forum regular better that some veterans in your own corp. By reading their posts, you can easily see what their character specialises in, whether they are pirate or 'carebear' or just a loud-mouthed, obnoxious buffoon. If you like the cut of their jib, why not seek them out in-game and fire off an EVEmail to see if they'd like to join your corp? A direct approach like this is flattering for them, and you never know – they might be disillusioned at their current place of work and sign up...



New recruits should be monitored by the people further up the chain of command as how willing they are to participate in group events, such as mining ops, border patrols, complex runs and so forth.

TRIALS AND TOOTHBRUSHES

There is one more hurdle to erect for any applicant to leap over (or fall flat on their arse trying to negotiate). A trial period or induction scheme is common in real life, and it's worth having one in EVE too, if only to see whether a new 'employee' is going to fit in. Some organisations have dedicated corporations set up just for the new recruits, similar to an academy. If you choose this route, make sure the CEO of this 'feeder' corp is also an active and high-ranking member of your main corp, otherwise recruits will feel segregated; at best you will endure high staff turnover, at worst you could be fostering a mutinous rabble.

Segregation doesn't have to be total, though. If you stick with the one-corp-fits-all policy, you need only make sure the inductee isn't given access to your high-end modules, ships and blueprints. By restricting access in this nature, certainly in the early months, it means no new employee is going to walk off with all of your hardware or secrets because they were left lying on the hanger floor! Original blueprints can be locked into place in hangers by 'executive voting' so they can still be worked from without them going walkabout.

New recruits, if they are aware of past incidents of corp theft in the game, will respect such a system, and when their internship is up, they should be made to feel they have earned your trust. In the meantime, ensure all your other employees stick to the rules. Slipping a rookie pilot quick access to gain an ammo blueprint may seem a reasonable request, but it has lead to financial ruin of many a high-profile company.

DON'T FORGET E-ON

Until very recently the web was your only option for recruiting, but since the arrival of the august journal you hold in your hands, hard-copy advertising has become a viable and very real option. Advertising within the pages of *E-ON* is available via the magazine editor's *alter ego*, Zapatero; keep an eye on the Dev-Blogs for latest info and rates.

A CARRIAGE CLOCK

This period of internship can last as long as you wish, although a month is common. If progress is satisfactory, you can promote your new recruit(s) to full member, with all the accesses and rewards associated with such status (although only the key members of your executive panel should have access to your most valuable assets, of course). Some corps have a secret voting system in place, so that in order for a candidate to be promoted to full member status, a majority vote is required. The benefit of this is that the new recruit must actively try to integrate with the team.

Hopefully, in this time the recruit will have decided what to specialise in, especially if yours is a corp with military and/or industrial departments. Think, too, about how to retain your most industrious pilots in the corp, with rewards, medals, ranks and other benefits. Some corps even offer retirement packages – people will want to move on, so why not give them a parting gift? You never know, they may return one day.

FINAL THOUGHTS

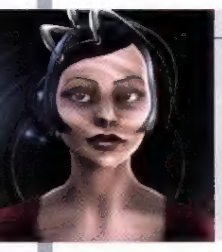
I hope this guide has been of some help, not only to those looking to find the right people, but also for those looking to join a new corp. Remember that recruitment isn't simply about people, it's about resources and making sure you keep hold of them. Corp theft is always a threat to a successful organisation, and by keeping the necessary recruitment checks in place you can minimise the risk, not only of losing billions in blueprints, but also having your military secrets revealed to your enemies. That said, there are no guarantees here. Alt characters can be hidden and the dedicated spy will always find a way in, but the more stringent your checks the more likely a thief is to give up and seek an easier target. You cannot *eliminate* these nefarious players, but you *can* thwart their attempts to deceive.

Finally, bear in mind two things: a corp staffed with the right people (with common interests) is more likely to lead to long-term friendship and trust. This makes EVE one of the most dynamic and interesting games ever made. Secondly, always remember that traitors usually come from within.

Don't have nightmares.

SLACKTALK

With thanks to the omgrawr.net archives... keep 'em coming




hackjack > dume f's
hackjack > ooww
hackjack > mommy
hackjack > plz
hackjack > f off
hackjack > go play mans game
Ujamaflip > is anybody offended by that language?
Kanein Encanto > Only for the fact it's horribly mispelt...

Carinae > Im gonna be AFK, about to eat my Wife and her Sister
Carinae > with *

Negotiator > i hate my ant allergy
Negotiator > why can't i be allergic to something less pussy
Negotiator > like horse tailworms
Negotiator > or something like that
Meridius > ants?
Negotiator > i mean i sniff an ant and my eyes melt
Meridius > wtf are you sniffing ants?

Corvin Blackwing > CLASSIC MOMENTS IN GATE CAMPING ...
Corvin Blackwing > 2005.07.23 22:49:31 notify Caybn E'vangel [EPIC.] has started trying to warp scramble you.
Corvin Blackwing > 2005.07.23 22:49:32 notify Dantane [EPIC.] has started trying to warp scramble you.
Corvin Blackwing > 2005.07.23 22:49:33 notify Bone [EPIC.] has started trying to warp scramble the Stargate, "Stargate (Keberz)"


Crackfarmer > im perma-banned from the test server :/
Berious > what did you do?
Crackfarmer > i podkilled oveur

Omber Zombie > god dammit, forums down
Omber Zombie > how am i supposed to pvp in this game if i can't use the Forums


Wuhu > Local Hull Conversion Reinforced Bulkheads I
Vandrion > Local Hull Conversion Nanofiber Structure I
Wuhu > i see your schwartz is as big as mine

CARELESS TALK COSTS LAUGHS...

EVE A-Z

Moving gently along the EVE alphabet; B is for...

BBL Popular chat acronym for 'be back later' and a common response (preceded by "gotta go, my hair is on fire...") to requests for aid from allied miners. Typically the fleeing character will return as soon as the final shipment of ore is safety stowed.

BEER Legal in most countries and popular with player and developer alike, beer is a substance that causes pilots to assume they are more skilled than they actually are. Contrary to the findings of market reports, it is far more popular than either Quafe or Starsi.

BLOB A collection of in-space pod pilots, as seen from the in-game map. To 'blob' is to rely on safety in numbers and is the recourse of uninspired alliance strategists, and a nightmare for the unfortunate server cluster they happen to clog up.

BOOKMARKS The boon of 'carebears' and the bane of 'griefers', bookmarks (BMs) are do-it-yourself navigation points that would facilitate safe and speedy travel if there weren't so many of them clogging up the server.

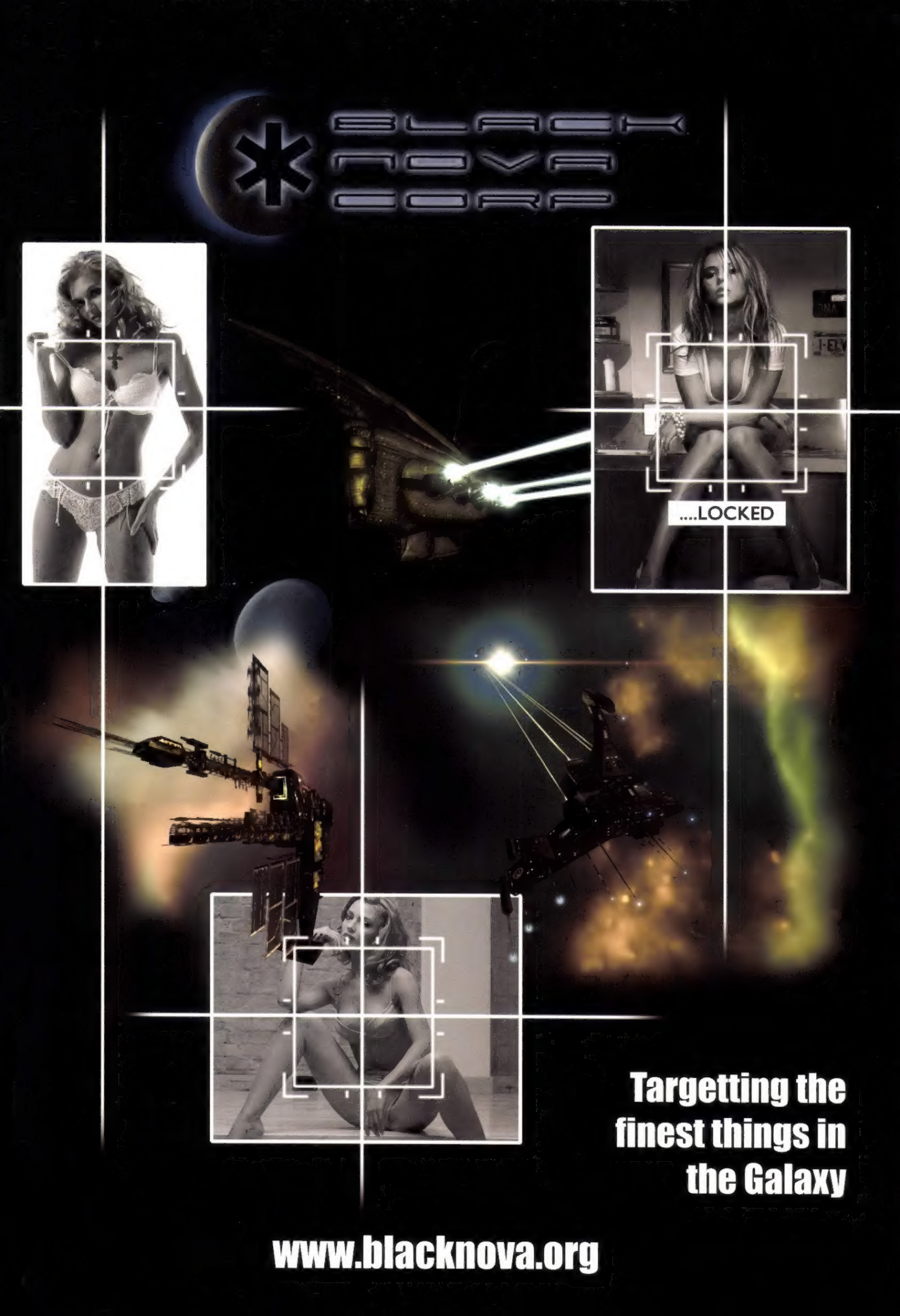
BUBBLE Slang term for an anchorable warp disruptor. Ever see Wile E. Coyote spread glue on the highway to catch the Roadrunner? Same idea, only it catches 'carebears'.

BUDDY PROGRAM An effective way to spam people you don't like with CCP-endorsed emails. It also has the beneficial side effect of tempting said people in to EVE, so you can further your dislike by repeatedly killing them in-game.

BRUTOR A distinct tribal caste of the Matari people whose jaws are often wider than their foreheads, many of whom take to wearing spectacles in order to look imposing and obscure eyes that look in opposite directions.

BUDDHA the secret codename of the EVE codebase that is scheduled to follow 'Kali'. 'Buddha' is the stage at which EVE will be at peace and the community will experience enlightenment. Planetary flight will be a key feature, but there will be no need for spaceships or aircraft as players will be able to traverse the cosmos by thought alone.

BUMPING The act of ramming an enemy ship so as to prevent warp drive alignment and therefore prevent its escape. Often referred to as the 'poor man's warp-scrambler'. Derivative: Bumpageddon – New Eden's biggest pool cue. Macro-miner in the corner pocket – CRACK.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